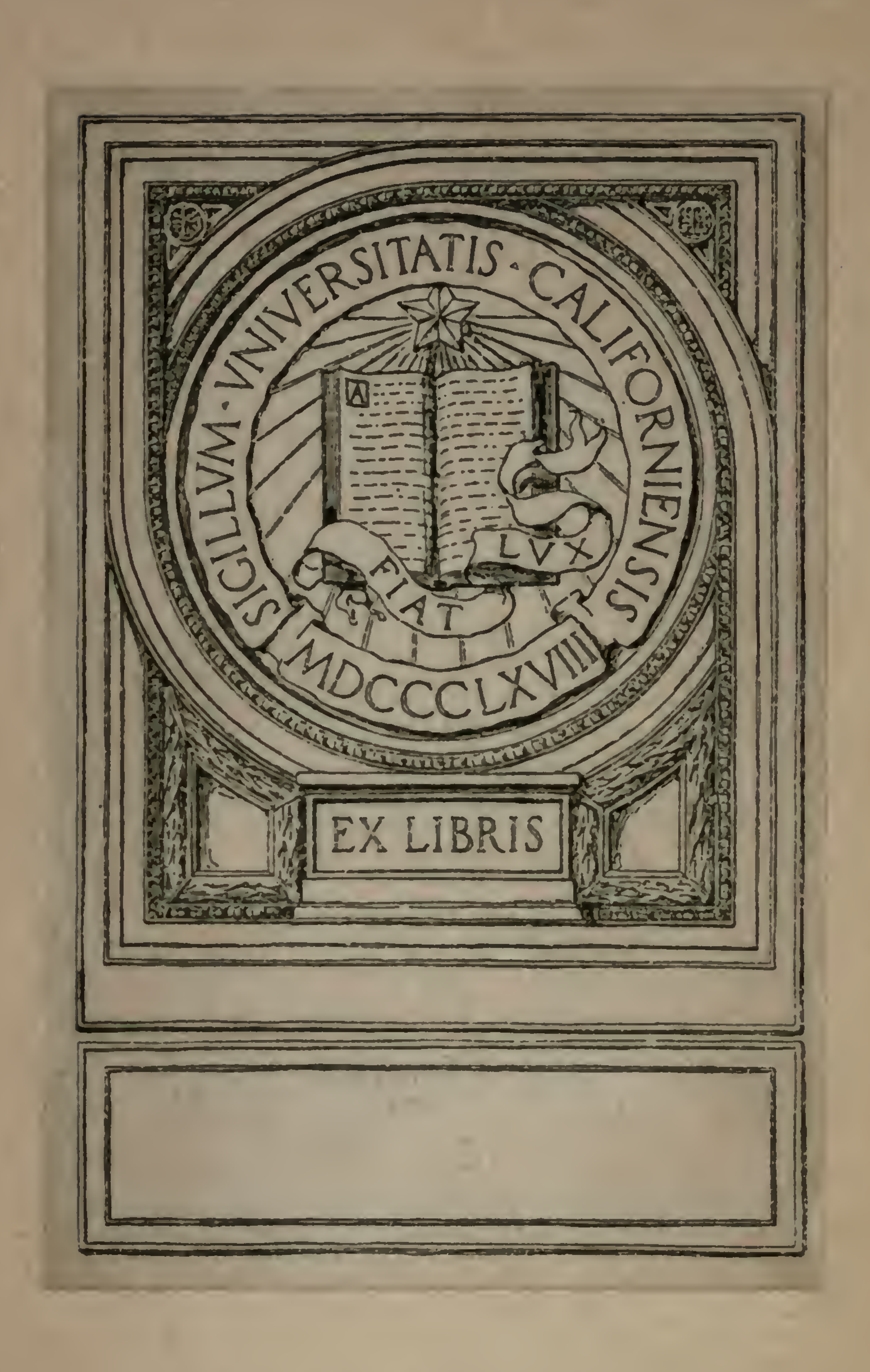



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BIBLE WAYS IN BIBLE LANDS



Frontispiece] THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

BIBLE WAYS IN BIBLE LANDS

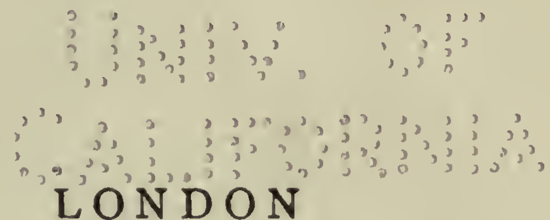
AN IMPRESSION OF PALESTINE

BY

MAUDE M. HOLBACH

AUTHOR OF
"DALMATIA, THE LAND WHERE EAST MEETS WEST,"
"BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA," "IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF RICHARD CŒUR DE LION," ETC.

*WITH 32 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ORIGINAL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OTTO HOLBACH*



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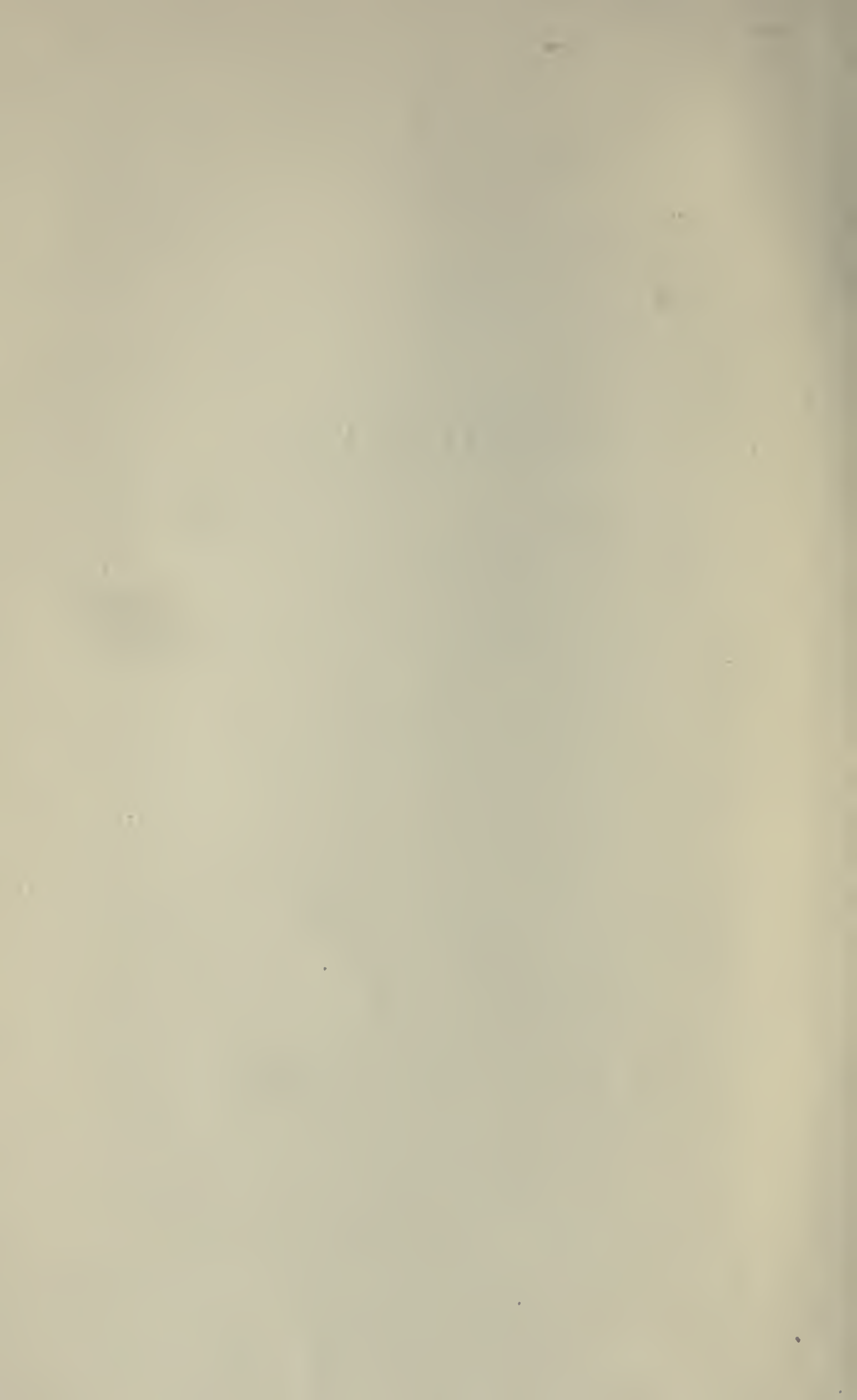
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INTRODUCTION

The waters of the Nile were my first introduction to Bible lands, and suddenly, though I had much neglected to study it for many years, Bible language flowed to my lips to express the common scenes of everyday life. No other language seemed to fit the picture! As amid the hills and valleys of Westmorland you are irresistibly impelled to quote the nature loving poet who dwelt there — as Tennyson's verses best describe the lonely fens of his native Lincolnshire, or Matthew Arnold's the "city of the dreaming spires" and its adjacent water-ways; so if you have anything of the poet's soul, and learned the Bible in your childhood, your spirit will find utterance in Scriptural language in the East—even amid the apparently incongruous surroundings of a crowded Nile pleasure steamer, or a tourist filled hotel—how much more, then,

if you escape into the solitude of the desert, or the lonely shores of the Lake of Galilee!

I will illustrate my meaning. We had ridden from Luxor one blue summer's day in midwinter, towards the Tombs of the Kings. The early morning was perfection, towards noon the heat became scorching—the sand beneath our feet caught and reflected the fiery radiance of the sun, so there was little comfort in sunhelmets or umbrellas. We had ridden for hours and had still far to go to reach the grateful coolness of our hotel, when suddenly we came to a great bluff of sandstone rising sheer out of the desert, and threw ourselves from the saddle beneath its grateful shade. "The shadow of a great rock in a weary land" flashed across my mind and almost escaped my lips, but not quite; I was still shy of quoting the Bible before strangers, and some hotel acquaintances, a London doctor and his wife were with us—they rode up after us—and the doctor uttered those beautiful words of the Psalmist as he entered the shadow of the rock.

It was a hundred incidents like this, that were the inspirations of this little volume. It is an attempt to show the unchangingness

of the East, and to sketch for those who cannot visit Bible lands the landscapes, the people, and the customs that our Master drew upon to illustrate His spiritual teachings as they are to-day—that is, almost exactly as they were nineteen hundred years ago. In this attempt I have been ably seconded by my husband's photographic art—indeed I aimed to write a little book around his pictures; but though Bible scenes are to be witnessed every day when you are not pursuing them with a camera, by a strange contrariness they elude you when you set out *with* a camera in definite pursuit; so though the sun's rising behind the Mount of Olives seldom found us in our beds in Jerusalem, and we became familiar figures at the city gates, where we waited to watch the stream of life flow in from the country and back from the town, our diligence was not always rewarded, and we sadly reflected when the time came for departure that years must be spent in Palestine to obtain a representative collection of pictures illustrating Bible texts and Eastern customs mentioned in the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, though our sheaves are less full of corn than we hoped, what we have reaped we offer here to our readers, hoping

some day to revisit "Terra Sancta" and return laden with more sheaves.

The pictures were to have been the "motif," and mine alone the task of explaining them, but for this I should have hesitated to venture on sacred ground where theologians are more at home and I feel my unworthiness to tread. The photographs being fewer in number I have added to them word sketches of my own of some sacred spots and a few thoughts they suggested. Well I know that they have been often before described by abler pens than mine, yet to each of us is given a distinct, separate gift of sight, and it may be that it is not always the most learned that always see the clearest.

I should like to add one word of warning to those who visit Palestine for the first time. Do not be dismayed if your first impression of it is one of keen disappointment—no, not even if you find the controversies round the sacred sites sorely try your faith—as they did mine; these things will in the end confirm what at first they seem to destroy, they will show you that the day is coming when men will worship "not at Jerusalem" but "in spirit and in truth."

BIBLE WAYS IN BIBLE LANDS

CHAPTER I

THE CALL OF MOUNT CARMEL

I FIRST saw "Holy Land" from the deck of the *Dunottar Castle* at anchor in the Bay of Haifa. It was a cloudless spring morning, and in the clear air of Syria the houses on the shore, though really a mile distant, seemed close by. I have an impression of white houses with flat roofs backed by green hills—a description which would fit many a town in the East—yet Haifa does not look wholly Eastern; it lacks the many minarets of Oriental towns where Islam is paramount. I felt before I landed that this was indeed "the Holy Land!" I knew that though we

have no record that our Master ever walked upon the seashore that lay between me and the little town, or trod the streets of "Khof," or "Khafah" (referred to in the Book of Judges as the "haven by the sea"), He certainly wandered over the hills, then dotted with prosperous towns and villages that lie between here and the Lake of Galilee; for His lowly home at Nazareth was only fifteen miles away.

If I were going to live anywhere in Palestine I should certainly choose Haifa, as the cleanest town and the one most beautifully situated in the whole country! It lies between the mountains and the sea at the foot of Mount Carmel, which is not, as I always imagined before visiting it, a single mountain but an extensive range, triangular in form.[1]

Some happy day when I revisit Palestine I hope to pitch my camp upon the sacred mountain, to explore its hills and valleys,

[1] The eastern side from the apex of the triangle is thirteen miles in length, the western twelve, and the base, which runs parallel with the sea, nine.

wooded glens and wild gorges, and penetrate into the hidden caves which were such secure hiding-places in Bible days, that they are mentioned in the Book of Amos as an illustration of the secrecy that God alone could lay bare.

In those far-off times the mountain was covered with a dense forest, now it is covered in spring with flowers, and when I visited it the slopes nearest to Haifa, which are crowned by the world famous Carmelite monastery, were aflame with the scarlet anemone which is the "lily of the field" of our authorised version, and to which Solomon's royal robes were likened.

There is a charming legend about the flower which may have been known to our Lord, according to which Hiram King of Tyre sent, with the cedar wood for the building of the temple, a present to King Solomon of a splendid scarlet robe, dyed with the famous Tyrian dyes (which, by the way, were made from a little shell-fish that may still be picked up by hundreds on the

beach). The gorgeous colour delighted Solomon's heart, till one day a child brought him a bunch of the blossoms of the scarlet anemone, and he saw that his treasured garment looked but dull beside the shining blossoms, and pointed out to his courtiers how the work of men's hands paled before God's handiwork.

Alas! I did but touch the fringe of Carmel! It is still almost an unexplored country, and wild life abounds—leopards, hyenas, wild boar, and gazelle roam over its hills and valleys — tourists who sleep at Haifa are generally content to walk or drive to the monastery and hasten on to the famous sites of New Testament history at Nazareth and Galilee—so the animals have the mountain solitude to themselves.

Is it only coincidence that another school of the "Sons of the Prophets" has established itself upon Mount Carmel—that young men are coming there from all over the Eastern world to sit at the feet of the teacher who believes it his divine mission to reform not

Islam alone, but the religions of the world? I believe that portion of the western world that has heard of the Persian teacher "Abbas Effendi" (and it is an ever-increasing portion, for his recent brief visit to England drew the attention of our Press), with a few exceptions of advanced thinkers who have taken the trouble to study his doctrines, looks upon him as the founder of a "new religion." As such he was described to us by an Englishman living in Palestine and knowing him personally, but investigation since has shown me the description was misleading.

If the author of "Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi,"[1] who spent a month at Acre to investigate the teaching of Bahaism at the fountain head in December 1902, did not view this remarkable religious movement in too favourable a light it must inevitably increase the spirituality of all who come within its influence, whether Christian or Moslem, for he tells us in his introductory chapter: "It recognises every other religion

[1] Myron H. Phelps of the New York Bar.

as equally divine in origin with itself. It professes only to renew the message formerly given by the Divine Messengers who founded those religions . . . no man is asked to desert his own faith: but only to look back to its fountain-head and discern, through the mists and accumulations of time, the true spirit of its founders." Is not this the crying need of the world to-day, that we all act up to the faith we profess? What a wide step towards universal brotherhood to "recognise every other religion as equally divine!"

Abbas Effendi once said in answer to an enquirer, "The Spirit is the same everywhere! Under whatsoever name men address Him, He will respond to their call." In other words, his mission is "not to destroy but to fulfil," not to tell men that they have prayed amiss, but to urge them to live "more nearly as they pray." Abbas Effendi is in line with the great spiritual movement which has arisen in the West, and found expression in Christian Science

and New Thought in the importance he attaches to the power of thought. "Every deed of life," he says, "is a thought expressing itself in action; it is the actual mirror of the man within."

He is in line with our most advanced thinkers, philosophers, and students of human nature in the importance he attaches to character building. "Therefore," he says, "we must be active—we must be up and doing. Our deeds build up our characters, and the building of our characters is our task. Life in this world is for this purpose. . . . If heredity has not given us the qualities of character necessary for our high moral and spiritual advancement, we must labour to build up a new structure within ourselves which will be adequate to that aim. Each man must look to himself and within himself to find his errors and weaknesses."

This is not the dreamy mysticism we are apt to associate with an Eastern sage—it is a philosophy of life calculated to

"strengthen the feeble knees," and make us ashamed of pleading our environment or ancestry as an excuse for our laziness—it will not permit us to "put our ain burdens on the Lord's back!"

And the teacher lives the life he preaches, taking but four hours' rest in the twenty-four, and but one meal a day after his cup of tea that follows his prayers at sunrise. He labours incessantly—teaching, distributing alms to the poor, and carrying on a vast correspondence. An interesting comparison may be drawn between Abbas Effendi's life of rigid self-denial and work, and that of the leader of a great religious movement in the Western world, General Booth, who likewise is, as all the world knows, able to reduce his bodily needs to a minimum, and yet has a capacity for work far exceeding that of the average man of far younger years.

Self - denying, however, as is Abbas Effendi's life, he does not believe in the rigid asceticism that cuts itself off from

mankind. He has left for a time his home on the slopes of Carmel to come to the Western world. When I was at Acre, he was at Alexandria—that battle-ground of the Church and the Philosophic Schools in the first centuries of Christianity—now he has come to the throbbing heart of our own London, which needs his message hardly less than his native Persia.

I must beg my readers pardon if I have digressed too much from the beaten path to dwell on the Sage of Haifa who in God's Providence was so wonderfully brought as a prisoner to Acre, and led to make his home and teach his followers so near to the Galilean Lake, which was the scene of our Lord's earthly ministry.

The Sacred Mountain drew to it yet another reformer who founded a colony which has exerted an enormous influence for good on the surrounding Arab population.

Just beyond the little town of Haifa, at the foot of Mount Carmel, you come to a suburb of attractive little homes; each in a

well-kept garden, surrounded by highly cultivated cornfields and vineyards that are an object lesson in the fertility of the soil of Palestine when properly cultivated.

This is the German colony founded late in the sixties by Professor Hoffman of Würtemberg, a University professor and minister of the Lutheran Church. Professor Hoffman was a reformer, and the fate of most reformers was his; indeed, there is a certain likeness in his story and that of the founder of the Baha'is, Ali Mohammed. Both aimed to reform the state religion of their country, and both came into collision with the ecclesiastical authorities. The Persian reformer, in a semi-barbarous land, paid for his opinions with his life; the German, belonging to a civilised nation, was merely expelled by the Lutheran Church, just as its founder Luther had been from that of Rome.

That Dr Hoffman, like Mohammed Ali, had a large following, is proved by the petition signed with twelve thousand names



"THE SHEEP FOLLOW HIM FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE."

[*Face p.* 10



he presented at the Diet of Frankfurt praying for church reform. Perhaps if the crown of martyrdom had been his, they would have increased like the Baha'is; as it is they are represented only by three colonies in Palestine, originally composed of those who followed their revered leader into exile, but though small in numbers, the influence of the three hundred German colonists at Haifa on the surrounding Arab population has been very great.

By the simplicity and sincerity of their religion, the scrupulous honesty in their dealings, and the industry and harmony of their lives, this little band of men and women have held high the standard of Christianity, and commended their faith to the world.

Nor is the moral benefit of a business and industrial community setting a living example of practical Christianity all the advantage that Haifa has denied from the German colonists. Their industry has been the corner stone on which the trade of the port has been built up, till it has

become one of the most prosperous towns on the coast. The Arabs have imitated the improved methods of agriculture of the German farmers, and land has increased in value enormously. Before their coming carts were unknown, and all inland transport had to be carried on by means of beasts of burden laden with pack saddles, as it is in Morocco to-day.

The road from Haifa to Nazareth, one of the first in Northern Palestine, was made by the colonists at their own expense, and did much to reconcile the local government to the new comers, whom they at first treated with marked hostility. Life was far from a bed of roses for the Germans in the early days of the colony, for though none of them possessed much means, they were taxed three and four times as much as the natives by the unscrupulous Turkish officials.

The faith that the second advent of the Messiah (which their leader's Bible studies had brought him to the conclusion was approaching) would occur in Palestine, sustained the

colonists in their struggle, and now, firmly established with "their lamps burning," they wait the coming of their Lord.

Strange and sad it is that even in religion there should be rivalry; that all good men working for the spiritual progress of the world cannot join hands as brothers. The monks of the Carmelite monastery (which claims direct succession from the School of Sons of the Prophets) overlook from the lofty site of their beautiful monastery the modest homes and smiling fields of the German farmers, whose lands join their own. Many good and noble men there have been among the fathers, notably that brave friar who, sustained by faith in God, begged throughout Europe to raise the money to rebuild the convent after its destruction by the French, but local report says they held aloof from, if they were not "covertly hostile" to, the Protestant Germans in their early struggles; and there is a painful episode related by a modern writer of something like a battle royal over

the boundaries, when the townspeople, aided by the Germans, tried to pull down the wall by which, they claimed, the monastery had enclosed town lands, and the monks, "armed only with spiritual weapons," held aloft a cross and evoked a curse in German and Arabic on those who intruded on their "sacred" ground!

The point at issue was, of course, whether the documents by which the monks claimed the land were legal, but that did not lessen the pity of the quarrel between two "religious communities," though such strife is, alas, too common in Palestine.

Travellers are always warmly welcomed at the monastery, in conformity with the old time traditions of hospitality, and it is a delightful place to stay a few days, being perched 500 feet above the sea on a spur of the mountains. No bill will be given to you when you go, but universal custom sanctions an offering in accordance with your means.

Among the mystics who have been drawn from their own land to Mount Carmel, the

brilliant gifted writer Laurence Oliphant, and his high-born, delicately-nurtured, lovely wife, who was content to labour at lowly household work varied with kindly ministrations to her humble neighbours for five long years, will never be forgotten.

The story of the Oliphants' life at Haifa is sympathetically told in the "Memoirs" written by Margaret Oliphant. After his strange meteoric career (in which place and power as a statesman and leader of all that was best in social life were sacrificed to a religious principle which bade him go and work as the meanest labourer in an obscure community in America and consent to years of separation from his devoted mother, Lady Oliphant, and his adored wife), the happiest years of Laurence Oliphant's life were spent at Haifa in a house in the German colony which is still pointed out. When you see it, reflect that "the whole soul of the two to whom the house belonged was bent upon leavening the world with a knowledge of the love of God . . . their

main object was to live a life like that of Christ in the world!" By birth, petted children of fortune, by early association, accustomed to the intellectual life of London and Paris, they were content with the society of the homely, kindly Germans and the love of "a little floating circle of friends and disciples who circled around them." Not a few travellers with names famous in Europe, made a *détour* to visit that idyllic home where the Oliphants lived the life that they believed was the manifestation of the highest truth, loving each other and all the world, and "going about doing good."

Laurence Oliphant's first visit to Palestine was to report on sites for the Jewish Colonies, then about to be founded. During his residence there, he was ever ready to hold out the hand of friendship to the poor wandering Jews who landed forlorn strangers in the land of their fathers; but his biographer says it was "more what we call chance than any deliberate choice that directed them towards Haifa, a small

bright Syrian town lying on the western edge of the Bay of Acre, with a beautiful view across the bay of that historic fortress and the noble background of the hills of Galilee." Was it chance? Was it not rather the Divine Leader the Oliphants followed so unswervingly that not even the disillusion of finding the earthly leader they had half deified had feet of clay, could shake their faith, that led them to Mount Carmel?

All that was earthly of Alice Oliphant rests in the German cemetery at the foot of the sacred mountain, and men and women of diverse tongues and creeds have shed tears beside her grave.

Her death followed a trip to Tiberias, which she describes in the letters as "the happiest fortnight in my life," and was put down to the fever-laden air of the low ground by the lake where they camped. Almost it seems as if that sweet spirit had attained as near perfection as mortals can in this world and so passed on.

She breathed her last on the heights

of Mount Carmel, which had been her summer home, and the grief of the people of the adjacent Druse villages was intense. "If five of our best sheiks die village not so sorry!" they said, and when bearers were wanted to carry the corpse down the mountains to the road where carriages could meet the funeral *cortège*, fifty men vied for the honour, where only eight were needed. Two miles from the colony, all the principal men of the German colony, and all the foreign consuls and their dragoman and cavasses met the bier with many Arabs and a Moslem guard of honour sent by the Governor. "Had she been a queen," her sister wrote, "she could not have been received with more respectful homage—and it was all a spontaneous expression of love—personal love for her."

Does it not link modern life most wonderfully with Bible times, that the Mount of Elijah has ever been, and still is in these latter days, the home of saints and mystics who count the world well lost for God.

CHAPTER II

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF JERUSALEM. THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Most travellers visiting Palestine who land at Haifa proceed thence to Nazareth *viâ* the Lake of Galilee before going south to Jerusalem.

We reversed this and proceeded by steamer to Jaffa, and thence by train to Jerusalem, hoping to finish our work there before the Easter crowds came. But from the point of view of gathering the right impression this procedure was a mistake! We thus missed the first sight of the Holy City from afar which, since the early days of Christianity, has kindled the imagination of generations of pilgrims, and has still such magic power to touch men's hearts who are going to Jerusalem in the pilgrim spirit!

To land at Jerusalem by train is a terrible disillusion — even the most imaginative of travellers finds it impossible to realise, as he stands on the platform of the mean, modern railway station, surrounded by tourists and clamorous Arab porters, that this is the city that witnessed the supreme Tragedy in the World's history, for whose possession the chivalry of Europe was cheerfully sacrificed in the Crusades, the city that is a name beloved by Christians all over the world—the earthly prototype of the New Jerusalem—the City of God.

"When Jesus saw the city He wept over it." In prophetic vision the Master saw, perhaps, not only the horrors of its siege, but its degradation in these latter days—its dirt, its beggars, its holy places, where Moslem soldiers stand on guard to keep the peace between the Greek and Latin "Christians," and other Moslem guides pour an irreverent stream of wholly inaccurate information about the Bible sites into the ears of casual tourists who are "doing Jerusalem!"



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

[*Face p.* 20



We were thankful to escape from the crowded train and bustling station to the quiet of a little hotel, outside the walls, frequented by leisurely people, many of whom are *habitués* returning season after season to paint, or write, or study the archæology of Palestine.

This hotel, though unpretending, has for my country people the added merit of English management and an Oriental atmosphere, for the building surrounds a courtyard, now converted into a dining-hall and roofed over, and, as its architecture shows, was once the home of a wealthy Turk. We dwelt in the quarter that had been the harem, and enjoyed a spacious apartment with the alcoves for beds peculiar to Turkish domestic architecture, overlooking a little garden with trees where the birds twittered all day long. Beyond the ground sloped down, so we overlooked the flat-roofed Eastern houses, and saw beyond them a view which has impressed itself for ever on my memory! The Mount of Olives—and a little to the

right the blue hills of Moab! The sounds of the city came but faintly to our ears—loudest were the bells, especially that of the Russian church near by, which tolled day after day the passing of some simple souls from far-off Russia, who had attained their wish to die in "Holy Land." It never even saddened me; I, too, counted them happy knowing that supreme faith cannot lose its reward!

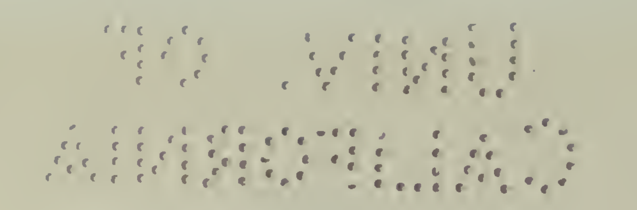
I had little or no knowledge of the controversies that wage around the Holy Sepulchre when I went to Palestine, so it seemed natural and fitting to follow the custom of pilgrims from time immemorial and turn my steps first to the Holy Sepulchre.

We passed through devious ways, through narrow, dark streets between stalls piled with the strange heterogeneous merchandise of the East, mingled with occasional Manchester prints of gaudy colours, along the narrow way which bears the name of the great ancestor of our Lord.

As we approached the Holy Sepulchre



THE "DAILY BREAD" OF JERUSALEM. [*Face p.* 22



the merchandise upon the stalls took on an ecclesiastical character, and rosaries and sacred pictures—crude in colouring, painfully realistic, cheap and ghastly representations of man's idea of a dying God, yet doubtless sacred and beautiful in the eyes to which they represented divinity—were offered for sale on all hands.

So we came to a vast courtyard before a great church, which enclosed it on three sides, and here were more booths, and the central space crowded with native buyers and sellers mingled with curious tourists.

Before us was the church Constantine erected to do honour to the tomb of our Lord, and in the Temple precincts, as in days of old, the buyers and sellers.

"The tables of the money changers" are literally there to-day—the vendors of religious merchandise are the present day prototypes "of them that sold doves."

As in a dream, I entered the lofty portals of the church and saw the Turkish guardians of the shrine, drinking their coffee

and smoking their pipes in a vestibule within the sacred building, close to the marble slab pointed out as "the Stone of Unction." The authenticity of this stone is disputed by learned authorities, but devoutly believed in by pilgrims, who prostrate themselves most reverently to kiss it; even if it should be genuine, they do not poor souls kiss the real stone which the monks say is underneath the marble slab placed over it for protection.

It was on this, my first visit to the Holy Sepulchre, that I first saw the Russian pilgrims, whose devotion presents one of the most moving spectacles of the Sacred City. Clad in their fur caps and long coats of coarse wool just as they come from the vast snow-clad plains of their northern land—quite unaccustomed to the heat of the East, unprovided even with a change of clothing, staff in hand, and perhaps a kettle or little bundle in the other, sustained on the long march through Palestine by religious fervour which ignores climatic conditions, hunger and fatigue—with the light of fanaticism in

their eyes, illumining faces rugged with exposure to the weather but often radiant with an unearthly beauty, with hands hardened by toil, clasping a crucifix, and eyes raised heavenward, you see them joining in the Russian mass, their united voices swelling forth in a triumphant strain that brings a lump to your throat and a moisture to your eyes, whether you hear it echoing amid the dim aisle of a church, or pealing heavenwards as the pilgrim train wends its way to Jericho or Bethlehem.

The spirit of the Crusades of the men who followed Peter the Hermit and fought under the banner of Richard Cœur de Lion is not dead—it lives to-day in the Russian pilgrims!

We saw the Church of the Holy Sepulchre first, under the convoy of a kindly Franciscan monk, whose acquaintance I had made the previous year at Oberammergau, and is one of the brothers delegated to perform the office of a guide; therefore I saw at first as the Church of Rome sees, and came near to accepting the authenticity of the multitudinous "Holy

Places" grouped under the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Every detail of the Story of the Passion may be studied, if you accept Roman tradition, in the actual place where it happened; there is the Chapel of the Mocking, with a fragment of a column on which you are told our Lord sat with thorn-crowned brow and endured the soldiers' raillery, and the Chapel of the Crucifixion where He was nailed to the Cross, the Chapel of the Apparition where it is affirmed He appeared to Mary Magdalene, and which contains a portion of the Column of the Flagellation. You will remember that tradition asserts the position where the three crosses and the crown of thorns would be found, was revealed in a vision to the Empress Helena, when you are shown the chapel named after her and the chair in which she sat to direct the excavations at the point miraculously pointed out.

The chapel where the monks, both Greek and Roman, say the Holy Cross was found is known as the Chapel of the Invention

of the Cross? Surely from the point of view of the unlearned who do not know it means the Finding of the Cross from "Invenio," I find the title is not a happy one!

The effect of the many chapels and the rival claims of the Latin, Greek, Armenian, and Coptic Churches, who each have their own special quarters of the building and a common right of access to the Sepulchre, is such as to utterly bewilder a stranger!

I carried away from that first visit no distinct remembrance of anything but the Central Shrine, into which visitors pass one by one through the little ante-chamber, known as the Chapel of the Angels; for here, according to tradition, the heavenly visitants were seen by the disciples seated on the stone, that had been rolled away from the door of the Sepulchre, and a portion of which occupies the centre of the ante-chamber.

I remember that I had to stoop to enter the low door to the Holy of Holies. Was

it thus made to symbolise the attitude of humble reverence in which one should approach so sacred a spot, or is the lowly portal only a measure of protection?

The little vaulted chamber which is the Holy of Holies to the greater part of the Christian world, can admit but one or two persons at a time beside the officiating priest, who stands beside the sepulchral couch used as an altar, and sprinkles each pilgrim with holy water.

No thinking man or woman can enter it without emotion, for it is hallowed by millions of prayers. Because there is power in thoughts, this focussing point of religious fervour cannot fail to impress even the unbeliever who comes to it with an open mind; not because the body of a dead Christ may have rested on the stone beneath the marble altar, but because a living Christ speaks there to-day to the hearts of His faithful people! For one moment when I entered there I hesitated between the stern attitude of mind and

body bequeathed to me by my Protestant forbears, and the posture of reverence enjoined by the Roman and Greek churches.

My subconscious mind was at work, questioning whether to kneel were not to assent to the superstitions that have grown around the Sepulchre, to seem to admit more than I honestly could accept; but the religious atmosphere of the place overcame me. I found myself on my knees almost unconsciously. I thought at the time I adopted the attitude of devotion to avoid hurting the feelings of those around me, now I know that I was drawn into the mystic fellowship that unites those of all nations and churches who seek communion with God.

It mattered not that some of us came to Him in one way, and some in another—we were all there in Jerusalem because we believed that our Lord had once lived here on earth and triumphed over death, and were trying according to our lights to walk in His footsteps. We could not speak each other's

language, for under that dome that covers the Sepulchre were Greeks, Copts, Armenians, Syrians, as well as most of the nations of Europe and the new world ; but thought does not need language — one purpose united us and all those who throughout the ages have come to the Holy City seeking the things of the Spirit.

If you look deep enough into men's hearts faulty exteriors cease to jar and you forget to criticise. "It is possible so to walk that the whole earth seems the garden of the Lord, and every fellow being in it an invited guest."

CHAPTER III

BIBLE PICTURES OF JERUSALEM

The sun rising behind the Mount of Olives drew us thitherward on the first morning we awakened in Jerusalem. Who that has witnessed sunrise in the East can ever forget it — the exquisitely clear air and tender tints of the sky before the fiery ball appears, seem to belong to another world, purer and more rarified than this!

In the silence of the dawn, I stood upon my balcony looking east to the mountain of hallowed memories, clear cut against the reddening sky. Even those two great churches—the Russian and newer German which disfigure the Mount of Olives to-day, and arrogantly thrust themselves upon your attention from every point of the city (surely

those who built them had too much of the spirit that sought "the chief seats in the synagogue" rebuked by the master of old) —failed to disturb my meditations! How many such sunrises our Lord must have watched from that mountain before me in the few brief years of His earthly life! Over the brow of the hill I knew lay Bethany—the home of His friends and His best loved retreat. In the city of Jerusalem the streets He trod are buried far below the level of those we tread to-day, but on the rocky pathways that cross and re-cross the Mount of Olives we may be literally walking in the footsteps of Jesus and the fishermen who followed Him from Galilee.

Trying to realise these things, I set forth, skirting the northern city wall, which with its many towers is so wonderfully impressive —so entirely what you picture the ancient walls of Jerusalem to be—that you forget it was built long after the time of Christ. We met the country-folk on their way to enter the city by the Damascus gate, and the



INSIDE THE DAMASCUS GATE. [*Face p.* 32

camera, our unfailing companion on all our walks in Palestine, was called into requisition to secure a picture of the towering walls and the train of camels, flocks, and herds wending its way along the white road beneath.

Jerusalem stands on a ridge between two deep valleys, so strangers approaching the city literally "go up to" the Holy City. To ascend the Mount of Olives, we had to cross the Valley of the Kedron. The Eastern world is early astir, and Bible pictures crowded upon us at every turn, and yet eluded us either because they moved too quickly or other figures intervened and made photography impossible. What looked like moving bundles of small sticks from which a donkey's legs protruded was "the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow will be cast into the oven," in other words, a prickly plant, probably also the "thorns" our Lord had in mind which He described as choking the "good seed" in the parable, which skirts the wayside

in Palestine, and is commonly used for fuel. The "whited sepulchres" of the Jewish burial-places were prominent on either side of the road, for outside the gates of the living city of Jerusalem is a vast city of the dead, and the old custom of white-washing the solid slabs of stone, which cover the graves, is still adhered to. Doubtless the original intention was that they should be noticeable from afar lest any one should inadvertently approach them and become ceremonially unclean. The contrast between their fair exteriors and the putrefication within was applied by our Lord as a simile to illustrate the fair outward seeming of Pharisees. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres which outwardly appear beautiful but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness."

"The poor and maimed and blind and lame" were here seated by the roadside to beg their daily bread from pious pilgrims and kindly tourists touched by the sight of



WHITED SEPULCHRES.

[*Face p.* 34



the physical infirmities. The lepers recalled vividly to mind the story of Naaman's healing, and the ten who were cleansed by the Master, and the one who alone returned to give thanks. The lepers still have their own quarter, but no more, as in the days of old, are they thrust out from the city and compelled to warn all comers of their condition by the sad cry of "unclean."

So we came to Gethsemane with its ancient olive trees, that may well have been, as the monks declare they are, the very trees which were the mute witnesses of the Agony. Their massive trunks, so old and grey and gnarled, contrast strangely with the blue violets that grow in the hollow of their mighty roots, and perfume the garden with their fragrant breath. It seems peculiarly fitting that the order founded by that gentle spirit St Francis of Assisi should be the guardians of this sweet and sacred garden. Many travellers have inveighed against its trim walks and flower-beds, and regretted

that the olive grove of the time of our Lord has been converted into this fenced garden of to-day. But had it not been fenced and cared for, its olive trees would have gone the way of all the trees upon Mount of Olives, while withered flowers from its lovingly tended beds are treasured by thousands who have never visited the garden but received these tokens of it in the letters from Jerusalem of some more fortunate friend. To me Gethsemane seemed peculiarly hallowed—a peaceful spot to escape from the crowd it is still, just as it was nineteen hundred years ago! My regret was not for the neat walk and flowers, but for the fence that kept out the poor Russian pilgrims, who humbly walk round the garden on the outer side, eagerly gazing where they may not tread. I saw them envying me the precious bunch of violets and sprays of olive given me by the kindly Franciscan brother, and I parted the latter among them as I left the garden, for which they thanked me in a strange tongue but with gestures

more eloquent than words, kissing my hand fervently.

Could they not be allowed in the garden? I asked, but the monk shook his head, and replied that in their religious fervour they would pluck every leaf off the trees, and root up every plant in the garden. Yet I felt their right to enter was greater than mine. They had sacrificed more to come to "Terra Sancta!"

From Gethsemane three paths ascend the Mount of Olives — the one which crosses the ridge to Bethany must be that by which our Lord came "riding upon an ass" on that ever memorial Palm Sunday of His brief earthly triumph. From this height He beheld the city and "wept over it." Thousands of pilgrims year by year throughout the centuries have paused at the spot tradition has pointed out to recall the gospel story, and look upon the city from this spot. In imagination, as you stand there you may hear the shouts of the multitude, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Doubtless, many people

of Bethany were there beside those who, attracted by the shouting and seeing the little procession coming over the mountain, had gone out to meet it; and what a mean procession—only one Man riding, and He mounted upon a little donkey with its foal frisking alongside, and accompanying Him a little group of peasants from the North of Palestine, one of whom leads the donkey! "What a fuss about nothing!" some of those doubtless said, who, actuated by curiosity, had gone to meet the advancing crowd. Then I think they may have met His gaze and paused, awed by some power they felt, but could not understand, so those who came as idle lookers-on took up the shouts of triumph, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and with outstretched hands, blessing the people as He went, with children bearing palms before Him, and many spreading garments in the way as before an Eastern monarch, the Nazarene rode into Jerusalem.

You have known the story all your life,

but it takes on a new aspect amid the scene in which it happened! Often, very often, processions wind along the stony paths of Olivet, conspicuous from afar against the grey white of its bare hillsides —ever they recall to me the Procession in which the Master was the central figure, and the crowd in one brief flash of inspiration recognised His Divinity. How that one hour of triumph must have raised the hopes of the disciples who were so far from comprehending their Leader's divine mission! Can you not imagine how their hearts beat high with hope that Palm Sunday long ago?

And what is there left for us to see that met the Master's eye, and wrought in Him such bitterness of spirit that it wrung from His lips those sorrowing words: "If thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 42).

Jerusalem lies before us beyond the Kedron valley. It is not the city of our Lord's time, but so unchanging is the East,

it cannot, in its general effect seen from afar, be very different, for archæologists tell us the ancient sites have been retained, and that the sacred enclosure of the Harem, which occupies the quarter of the city nearest to the Mount of Olives, is not only actually identical with the ancient Temple area, but the walls are those of the time when Herod rebuilt the work of Solomon, and the Phœnician masons' marks correspond with the Bible account. These massive walls look of immense antiquity, their mighty corner stones may well have suggested the comparison, "Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

From the Mount of Olives this vast cloistered space with its beautiful Dome of the Rock, its olive trees and cypresses, its aloofness from the turmoil of the city, helps us to reconstruct the glorious Temple that once crowned Mount Moriah. Beneath the lovely dome known as the Mosque of Omar,[1]

[1] The Mosque of Omar is most incorrectly so called, as it is strictly speaking not a Mosque at all but a Mohammedan Shrine, and had probably nothing to do with Omar.



THE SACRED ROCK "MORIAH" IN THE CENTRE OF THE MOSQUE OF OMAR, COMMONLY CALLED "THE DOME OF THE ROCK."

[*Face p.* 40

is the Sacred Rock, now venerated by the Moslem world as the scene of Mohammed's ascension—to the Christian and the Jew sacred as the site of the Altar of Burnt Offerings of Solomon's Temple. Once more, as on Mount Carmel, we find here men of divers faiths agreeing to honour a sacred site. These thoughts and many others rushed upon me as I gazed for the first time from Olivet upon Jerusalem. Then I raised my eyes to the hills! There no mistake is possible—the hills of Judea, like those around the Lake of Galilee, have not changed since they met the eyes of Christ. A great authority on Palestine, Colonel Conder, has expressed the opinion that in the unique position of the Holy City, hidden away in the Judean mountains, remote from Greek or Egyptian influence, lies the secret of the marvellous vitality of the Jewish nation. We know that mountain people are ever intensely patriotic, and that mountaineers preserve their race characteristics as tenaciously as they defend

their mountain homes. Jerusalem was accessible only by one of three difficult passes, unless Samaria was first conquered by an enemy. "Hence in the mountains of Judea the national faith had a secure home. The Philistines overran the plains, Egyptian and Assyrian monarchs conquered Samaria and Galilee, but a small band of undisciplined peasants was able, under the Maccabees, to hold at bay the armies of the Seleucidæ, and it required the fullest efforts of Roman energy and discipline to compass the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus or under Hadrian."

I turned and still ascended till I stood upon the summit of the mountain and thrilled to the first sight of the Dead Sea and the Wilderness of Judea — which is all that its name implies of utter desolation!

A succession of naked hills and gloomy gorges shelved down almost from my feet to the Jordan valley. Once more imagination was busy with a Bible picture—a hermit



ANCIENT CYPRUS TREES IN THE TEMPLE AREA, WITH THE MINARET OF THE MOGHREBI (MOORISH JEWS).

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from the wilderness, a wild looking figure baptizing a young and saintly looking Man, who, from His dress and mien, is proclaimed not of the people of Judea, but from the north. A sudden storm breaks, the lightning flashes, thunder rolls in the ears of the multitude, but the hermit has keener vision, more spiritual sight—to Him a voice from heaven declares: "This is my beloved Son," and He recognises in the Galilean peasant not alone Israel's promised Messiah but the One who "Taketh away the sins of the world."

Only inspiration could have moved a Jew to speak these words. John the Baptist, the hermit of the wilderness, living remote from men, could not have known what even the most learned and intelligent Jews, with their proud contempt for the nations outside the pale of the "chosen people," would hardly know, that the "heathen" also were at that very time looking for a Messiah, that Persia and India alike had prophets who foretold He should be "virgin born."

On the summit of Olivet I sat down to think of these things—I saw how the conception of Jehovah as a tribal deity faded in the minds of men who listened to Jesus teaching till they were able to conceive of a God of Love. I remembered how the vision of St Peter upon the housetop at Jaffa taught that great apostle to call no man "common or unclean," and the baptism of Cornelius and his household opened the Kingdom to the Gentiles. I forgot for a moment how many of us need the vision of a Peter to teach us greater charity—forgot how in the city at my feet Christians strove with one another in the very church built above the sepulchre of the Prince of Peace—my thoughts flew to another sacred mountain, that of Carmel and its latter-day prophet, the keynote of whose teaching is the burden of the song the angels sang at the birth of Christ, "Peace and good-will to man," who looks forward to the time when the whole world shall have one bond of brotherly religious fellowship. It

seemed to me that the door of the Kingdom is opening wider and wider, till one day it will embrace all the nations of the earth.

In one of those flashes of memory that transport us in a moment across time and space I was back in the garden of a little house at Oberammergau talking to the simple peasant who personated the Christ in that sacred play which drew the world to that Bavarian village. I was telling this devout child of the Church of Rome that I was a Protestant, and again in memory I recalled the tender smile with which he answered, "We are all children of one Father!"

CHAPTER IV

BIBLE PICTURES OF JERUSALEM (*continued*)

"O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. . . . We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever?"

This is the lamentation with which Hebrews of all ages and both sexes, from every quarter of the earth where they have been scattered, weep over the departed glory of their nation before the walls of the Temple from whose sacred precincts they are excluded.[1] "A scorn and a derision to

[1] Since writing this in December 1911 news has come from Jerusalem of the closing of the Wailing Wall by order of the Turkish Government, an arbitrary action incomprehensible under the new *régime*.



STUDY OUTSIDE THE WALLS, JERUSALEM.

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them that are round about us." How true is this to-day when curious tourists, many belonging to the nations which still hold the Jew in contempt, amuse themselves with the sight of their sorrow.

To see the "Wailing Wall" on Friday afternoon is one of the sights of Jerusalem. I am almost ashamed to confess that we went there with our camera, but I can honestly say that it was not without qualms of conscience we used it. It is a nice point for the photographer when and when not he is justified in using the little black box to depict human emotion. The more of the artist spirit he possesses, the more ardently he desires that his pictures should depict life and not lay figures, and life is made up of emotions; but if you happen to be conscientiously sensitive on the subject of not hurting other people's feelings, or seeing what they would fain hide, you are mentally torn in two different directions, with the result that, as we did, you lose your chances from the photographic point of view.

The Jew of Jerusalem is a very different individual to his black-coated, diamond-studded, twentieth century prototype of the great capitals of Europe. Like all Orientals he looks vastly better in his Eastern dress. Jew haters, it is true, like him less because he is even more a Jew with his love-locks dangling below his fur cap and his long garment — not infrequently fashioned of golden plush on holy days — down to the feet! I find him not only more picturesque but more dignified because "what is, is never vulgar, only what pretends to be," and in Palestine the Jew who is of the people wears his distinctive garb proudly, and does not seek to mingle with Christians, many of whom secretly if not openly despise him in spite of his money. The aristocracy of Judaism, of course, is a class to itself which is welcomed in one society by virtue of intellect, and to this my comparisons between the Eastern and Western Jew do not apply.

To the thoughtful mind the whole history of the persecution of the Jews, by the pro-

fessing Christian nations of the world, is brought back by the sight of the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem. Crushed between the fanaticism of the Church of Rome, and the fanaticism of Islam in the Middle Ages, this wonderful people were saved from extinction by the purity of their home life, the idealism taught in their synagogues, and their faith in the ultimate Messianic redemption — a faith of the order that "worketh patience." Those who sneer at love of money and condemn them as extortioners should remember the so-called "Christian" laws that cages them like wild beasts in the "Ghetto," forbid them to learn arts and sciences or to practise agriculture, closed the doors of the universities and academies against them lest they should develop their native intellectuality, and, cruellest blow of all, aimed at a people to whom home life is peculiarly dear and pure and sacred, forbid more than one member of a family to marry, and deliberately broke up homes by forcing the men to emigrate, so that as late as the eighteenth

century a Jewish father could very seldom hope to enjoy the happiness of living with his own children.

Meanwhile the governments that barred the door to the Jew who would work with his hands or with his brain in occupations ennobling to character, encouraged his ability in one direction only, and that presenting peculiar dangers to a people with whom thrift might easily develop into avarice, that of finance. Christians were forbidden to engage in usury—it was the only trade open to the outcast Jew, and the excessive demands made upon him by the State as the price of permitting him to exist at all forced him to charge a high rate of interest. "The Jews were unwilling sponges by means of which a large part of the subjects' wealth found its way into the royal exchequer." It is not human nature for the borrower to love the lender, so hatred grew against the Hebrew, and broke out in the massacres and expulsion of this unfortunate people from one country to another; yet, hunted

hither and thither, they ever made it a religious duty to obey and accommodate themselves as far as possible to the laws of the land in which they are settled in fulfilment of the words of Jeremiah—"Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Slowly but surely that prophecy is now being fulfilled. It was in Holland which early set its face against religious persecution that the day dawned for the Jew in the seventeenth century. In Austria a hundred years later, the Emperor Joseph II. repealed the laws against the long-suffering Hebrew, and enjoined that "the Jews were everywhere to be considered fellow-men." In Germany, Frederick the Great, influenced by Voltaire, was thinking so far ahead of his age as to express the opinion—"to oppress the Jews never brought prosperity to any government," and Moses Mendelssohn, the ancestor of the immortal musician, had emerged from the Ghetto to be

admitted to Berlin society as "the Jewish Plato" and head the long procession of the men of his nation whose genius the Gentile world has since delighted to honour. It is to the credit of our colonies that from the first they gave the Jews full citizenship, and of Canada that she admitted them to sit in her Parliament over fifty years before Lord Rothschild took his seat in the House of Lords, in 1866, as the first Jewish peer.

How they have responded to their improved conditions, how the money-lenders have become statesmen and world philanthropists, how Hebrew names are writ large on the roll of fame in the few short years that have elapsed since the ignominy of centuries was removed, is an oft-told tale. The persecutions in Russia towards the close of the last century, the anti-Semitic movement in Germany are echoes of the old spirit of intolerance, but only passing shadows. Nothing shows more plainly how the Jew has identified himself with the country of his adoption, and forgiven the

bitter past than that in Italy where they were only emancipated from the Ghetto in 1859, they at once devoted themselves to the service of the State, and the names of the Jewish soldiers who died in the cause of Italian liberty occur on all the national monuments. While in our own country's annals it is recorded that over a thousand Jews volunteered and fought for the country of their adoption in the South African war.

If you think of these things you will feel a deeper interest, a wider sympathy with the poor Jews of Palestine before the Wailing Wall. You will not, as some tourists do, think their sorrow only feigned, their lamentation an empty form. Formalists there are no doubt among them; but have we none in our churches? These Jews represent to me their brethren of the times of persecution; living on the very threshold of the spot where once their temple stood, its desolation is to them a perpetual sorrow. They have not the wider interests of their

brethren in Europe, they live more in the past, and generation after generation bring up their children to bewail the lost glories of Israel. Men and women mourn apart in little groups, resting their sacred books against the mighty wall that towers above to exclude them from the Temple Area; tears run freely down the wrinkled faces of aged men and women, some of whom rock themselves to and fro in their emotion. Little children are there too, not all with the dark hair we generally associate with the Semitic type, but many with ruddy curls. So hour after hour, week after week, year after year, century after century goes on the perpetual lamentation, the only "sacrifice" the Israelite may offer in Jerusalem to-day.

Many are the "sights" of the Holy City enumerated in the guide book, only to read the list of them makes your brain reel, and yet there is much worth seeing that is not mentioned. If in Rome you feel on departure, after weeks of industrious sight-seeing, that



COMING FROM MARKET.

[*Face p.* 54

you are only just beginning to know the Eternal City, so it is with Jerusalem! After you have gone through the stage of disappointment and disillusion which every newcomer experiences, the intense interest of this buried cradle of Christianity, this battlefield of the faiths of the world grips you, and you postpone from day to day, if possible, the hour of departure.

There is so much food for thought in Jerusalem! When once you know your way without a guide through its tortuous streets, you can spend hours wandering in their labyrinths or haunting the gates through which the varied life of the city flows.

It is quite a revelation to newcomers in the East to watch the meeting of friends who have not met for some time. They hasten toward each other, and bowing and touching heart, lips, and head to indicate that all are at the other's service, then fall on each other's necks and kiss exactly as the father is related to have kissed the

returned wanderer in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Not infrequently the re-united friends spend half an hour in embraces and complimentary speeches, for time is of no account, and the ornateness of Eastern greetings explains our Lord's command to the seventy disciples He sent out to preach and heal the sick. They were to "salute no man by the way," not from discourtesy, but because they had business more urgent than the observance of polite ceremonies which took so long.

By the Damascus Gate, most picturesque of all with its towers and battlements, there were always "labourers waiting to be hired," recalling the parable of the man who accosted such with the query — "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and received the answer—"Because no man hath hired us."

I liked to dream here of Saul, the persecutor, setting out towards the north, zealous to stamp out the new heresy. Doubtless he rode upon an Arab horse, just as persons of importance ride out of



A FEAST-DAY—GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

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this gateway to-day, and had attendants following him mounted on humbler mules and asses, laden with baggage and well armed, for the journey to Damascus was long and dangerous through mountain passes infested with robbers. Little he thought that years would elapse before his return, and then it would be as Paul, the leader of those he went to destroy. Over this road to the north travelled One greater than Paul many and many a time when He came from His Galilean home to keep the successive feasts at Jerusalem!

It is not unusual to-day to see little trains of country-people, some on foot and some mounted on long-suffering, overladen donkeys, travelling together for company; just so the friends and kinsfolk from Nazareth journeyed with Mary and Joseph on the memorable occasion when the child Jesus stayed behind in the Temple, and was not missed till they had gone "a day's journey." Often, too, I have seen a woman riding upon a little donkey and holding her babe

in her arms, and remembered the flight into Egypt.

It is very easy to picture the devout Jews of the time of our Lord going up to Jerusalem for the Passover when you see the crowds pressing into the city gates for the Mohammedan festival of Nêby Musa, which coincides with the Christian Easter and attracts Moslem pilgrims, often very fanatical, from afar. This pilgrimage to the shrine, venerated by Moslems as the grave of Moses, was formerly encouraged by the Turkish government to prevent any possibility of the preponderance of Christians in Jerusalem at Easter encouraging a rising.

Not far from the Damascus Gate is the Garden Tomb often linked with Gordon's name, which of late years has fastened so much upon the imagination of visitors who dislike the artificiality that surrounds the "Holy Sepulchre," without having given any study to the subject, turn with relief from the huge crowded church that covers the traditional burial-place of our Lord, to



THE GARDEN TOMB. [*Face p.* 58

the simple rock-hewn tomb that seems to answer so exactly the description. "In the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb," is so much more in keeping with the mental picture each of us has drawn for himself of the place where Joseph of Arimathea laid the body of Christ. I was told by an old resident of Jerusalem, who has given much study to the subject, and ought to speak with authority, that Gordon had never expressed his conviction that the tomb named after him is the Holy Sepulchre. He frequented the spot according to my informant, and loved to meditate there, because this ancient burial-place left in its original condition helped him to realise the scene of our Lord's burial and glorious resurrection. The tomb is a chamber cut in the rock, so that a natural couch or shelf of rock is left on one side for the body. It is easy to picture the Holy Women stooping to look in, and starting back amazed at the sight of the angel visitants.

Many sincere Christians, English and American Nonconformists in particular, reverence the spot as the real tomb, and visit it and sing hymns there at dawn on Easter morning; a touching little ceremony at which I was anxious to be present, but alas! my Easter at Jerusalem was climatically a sad disappointment. Howling wind and torrents of rain made both the open-air service on the Mount of Olives, above Gethsemane on the eve of Good Friday, and the Easter morning one at the Garden Tomb, alike impossible.

Those who accept the Garden Tomb as the "Sepulchre" tell you the Mohammedan graveyard on a grassy knoll adjoining the garden is "Golgotha," and indeed it presents a very satisfying picture of the "green hill far away outside a city wall," especially seen from the terrace of the new German hospice close by. Alas, how little the world has advanced in spirituality that we should still be disputing over the supposed site of a grave which matters not at all!



THE GATE OF THE COTTON MERCHANTS, IN THE TEMPLE AREA.

[*Face p.* 60

The crowning point of interest in Jerusalem to-day is the same which was the centre of life of the Jewish capital—the Temple Area. Every traveller devotes half a day to visiting this hallowed spot, generally with the escort of a Kawass from his consulate and a Turkish soldier; but happy are those who like ourselves obtain permission to wander at leisure within the precincts of the ancient Jewish Temple, now known to the Moslem world as "Haram esh Sherif," the Noble Sanctuary.

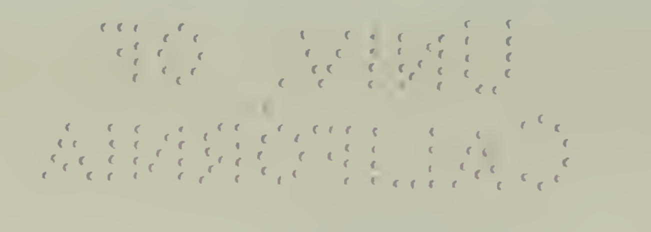
It has been well said that in choosing the positions of their finest mosques the Mohammedans have shown a love of great spaces which they drew from the desert—they might have filled the vast Temple Area, one-sixth of the whole city in extent, with buildings, but they wisely left it as a setting to the beautiful dome which enshrines the Sacred Rock, a dream of loveliness, and the only mosque that has ever tempted me from my allegiance to the Gothic of my northern land.

Blue is the colour of harmony. Occultists tell us that a room where azure meets the eye on all sides will exercise a benignant influence on those who enter it. Perhaps this is why the shimmering blue tiles that cover the Dome of the Rock are so grateful to the eye! Why should the precincts of this Sanctuary of Islam to-day be so infinitely more peaceful than those of the Christian Sanctuary, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre? No spot on earth, however, has witnessed greater tumult than this sacred inclosure. It is strange amid its quiet to recall the destruction of the First and Third Temples in smoke and flames, and the fierce strife at the taking of Jerusalem by Titus.

Eleven gates lead into the Temple Area, all guarded from profane feet which would trespass upon its sanctity without due permission. One of the first days I spent in Jerusalem I came suddenly upon an arched entrance through which I had a glimpse of lovely fountains, ancient olive trees, and tall cypresses, of a wide terrace with steps



VIEW IN THE TEMPLE AREA. [*Face p.* 62



beyond leading up to a building of fairy-like beauty glittering in the sunshine; this was my first sight of the Dome of the Rock, and I chafed at the restrictions which forbade me to approach it at the time. When, at a later day, I stood within, I had no eyes for the magnificence of the decorations, the gorgeous colouring of painted woodwork, and mosaics, and marble Corinthian columns. I knew it to be magnificent—a setting for a scene in the Arabian Nights; but my interest was in the jewel and not in its setting—an uncut gem unattractive to the eyes but hallowed by innumerable traditions. What could not this rock tell us of Bible history if it could but speak? Here Abraham laid the wood for the burnt-offering and prepared to sacrifice his only son; here stood the Ark of the Covenant; here was the altar of Burnt Offerings of Solomon's Temple. If ancient churches are hallowed by the thousands of prayers that have been offered there, how hallowed is the spot that was of the heart of the worship of Israel

from the time when David built his altar here, on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and which has been a central shrine of worship of Christians and Mohammedans alike all through the ages, and still remains to tell of the mighty past, though of the Temple that once surrounded it there "is not left one stone upon another?" Beneath the Holy Rock is a cave known as the Well of the Spirits, a place of peculiar sanctity in the eyes of pious Moslems, which lately attracted world-wide attention as the scene of the midnight excavations of some English explorers whose action, whatever was its motive, had the unhappy effect of reviving, not without good ground, the ancient animosity between Mohammedan and Christian. Not even the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant, according to tradition hidden here at the declaration of Jerusalem, or the treasures of Solomon, had they really been buried beneath the Sacred Rock, would have compensated for the evil that was wrought in stirring up religious and racial

hatred, much less the honour and glory of settling a disputed Bible site. The venerable Sheik of the Mosque, who succumbed to the temptation few Orientals can resist, of lavish backsheesh, has since been removed from the office he and his family have held for generations and incarcerated at Constantinople, and the Governor of Jerusalem shared a similar fate. Christendom cannot wonder if Mohammedan fanaticism once more breaks out against it in any quarter of the Eastern world, when in the twentieth century Christians in Palestine violate the Moslem holy places, and Christians in Tripoli revive the barbarisms that stained the Crusades.

In judging of the excitement of the ignorant multitude, when news of the intrusion into the sacred "Well of Spirits" reached them and roused such intensity of feeling that, for the first time in many long years, the native Christians barred their doors in Jerusalem for fear of massacre, we must remember the innumerable tradi-

tions that centre around the second holiest place in the Moslem world.

Pious Moslems believe the souls of the departed come to pray in the cave where David, Solomon, and Elijah (all reverenced by them as prophets) prayed, and where the excavators penetrated to dig at midnight. In spite of the legends of buried treasure, no Mohammedan would have profaned the sanctity of this place, even to gain the fabled wealth of Solomon, for there is another tradition that the round slab in the centre (probably a channel for carrying off the blood of the burnt sacrifices) is the gate of hell or hades, and here at the Judgment Day will sound the Last Trumpet when God's throne will be planted on the Rock from which Mohammed ascended into heaven.

A large part of Christendom still literally accepts the story of Elijah's translation, and there are Christians even to-day looking for the Second Coming of Christ upon Mount Carmel; so surely we should not ridicule the beliefs of the unlettered mystical children

of the East, especially in Jerusalem where the grossest superstition still is rampant among the more ignorant Christians. A lack of consideration for other people's beliefs led to the painful incident which occurred last year in the same "Well of the Spirits." A party of Americans insisted on entering when some Moslems were at prayer, and had so little right feeling as to laugh at them—an unseemly levity which met with terrible retribution in a pistol shot fired by an Arab pilgrim from the desert which deprived one lady of the sight of her right eye. Though it was a religious fanatic who thus avenged the insult to a sacred shrine, this tragic story illustrates the reverence Mohammedans had for the "Well of the Spirits," and the intensity of feeling that may be aroused by mere inconsiderateness and thoughtlessness.[1]

There is another mosque within the Temple Area which would be of greater

[1] Another version of the story told me was that the dragoman accompanying the party had pushed the Mohammedan rudely aside and interrupted his prayer to make room for the tourists.

interest if it did not suffer by comparison with the unique Dome of the Rock. This is the Mosque El Aksa, Justinian's basilica, built in honour of the Virgin Mary, of the original building, however, little more than the ground plan remains, for it has been more than once destroyed by earthquakes. At the siege of Jerusalem the fiercest fighting between Moslems and Christians took place in this church, which was stained with the blood of nearly 10,000 followers of the Prophet who fell in and around its walls. The graves of the murderers of Sir Thomas à Becket, who came here on pilgrimage to wipe away the guilt of this bloody deed, remain from the earlier church, and are still pointed out near the door. They cannot fail to have a special interest for English people, as a link with our island story. Beneath the Mosque El Aksa are the wonderful series of subterranean chambers, known as "Solomon's Stables," of which we obtained some fine photographs.



IN "SOLOMON'S STABLES," BENEATH THE TEMPLE AREA.

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Though local tradition seems to have no firm foundation in ascribing them to Solomon, stables they certainly were in the Crusaders' time, for the holes through which the horses' halters were passed are still visible in the stone pillars, and an old chronicler, John of Wurzburg, mentions that at that time they could hold 2,000 horses.

The effect of vast space visible through subterranean arches stretching away into the darkness is beautiful and impressive. So massive and very ancient looking are the stones that it is easy to believe they may have stood there since the time of Solomon, but archæologists ascribe them to the sixth century. They admit, however, that they stand on much more ancient foundations, and that their original object must have been to support the paved area above them and bring it to the same level as the rest of the Temple Buildings, so there is nothing improbable in the theory of the building materials being those that formed the foundations of Herod's and Solomon's temples,

though they have been moved in course of rebuilding.

The vaults are the home of hundreds of pigeons, which here find a safe sanctuary and flit in and out through apertures in the walls.

In descending to "Solomon's Stables" a small square chamber is seen with a scriptured niche surrounded by a canopy. Our guide called our attention to two Moslems kneeling before it, and informed us to our surprise that they were "praying to Jesus." Subsequently we learnt that this shrine has been known as the Cradle of Jesus since the twelfth century—probably a Crusading legend gave it its sanctity, and it is specially resorted to by childless women who, like Hannah of old who journeyed to Shiloh, make a pilgrimage to the Cradle of Jesus, confident that prayer there offered will be efficacious to take away their reproach. So the unchanging East repeats itself—children are not only as earnestly desired by the women of Palestine to-day as in patriarchal



THE DOME OF THE ROCK.

[*Face p.* 70

times, but they adopt the same methods to attain their desires.

The most beautiful and impressive view in the whole Temple Area is from the southern court. The great cupola of the Dome of the Rock rises above the ancient cypresses of the lower court—a broad flight of steps, down which perhaps some dark-robed, turbanned figure is descending, makes a foreground, pigeons flit around the shining dome, their white wings beautiful against the blue and green tiling of the walls, their soft cooing mingles with the sound of falling water playing in the fountains—it seems as if the site where once the Jewish Temple stood, is so peculiarly hallowed that it must ever be a place set apart from the noise and tumult of the city for communion with God. I visited it in the early morning and in the late afternoon, when the shadows lengthened and the sunset glory illumined it. I would have given much to go there once by moonlight, but that was a wish ungratified. Yet once I passed by moonlight through the

streets of Jerusalem on my way to a midnight mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and it was an experience I shall never forget. The narrow alleys and dark archways lay partly in dense shadow, and it had a most weird effect to hear from their depths the watchman's warning cry which gave information that strangers had passed, and recalled the "watchmen that go about the city" of the Song of Solomon. Thus we were heralded all the way, one guardian of the night calling to another from street to street to make known our approach, while occasionally we stumbled against some recumbent form of beggar man or woman waiting for the passing of the charitable pilgrims, or of a slumbering pariah dog which snarled and disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER V

BETHLEHEM

THERE is only one way to see Bethlehem, if you would fain catch a far-off murmur of the angelic music heard by a few poor shepherds nearly two thousand years ago! The way *not* to see it—pursued nevertheless by nearly all visitors—is to drive from Jerusalem with an attendant dragoman. There is another and a better way! It is to walk or ride leisurely alone, or with some one who, like yourself, is thinking of that old, old story, in the cool of the morning or the magic hour that precedes sunset in the East, along that road which follows the track the Virgin traversed ages ago, and lodge with the good Franciscan monks, whose monastery adjoins the oldest

church in Christendom, erected by Constantine over the birthplace of our Lord.

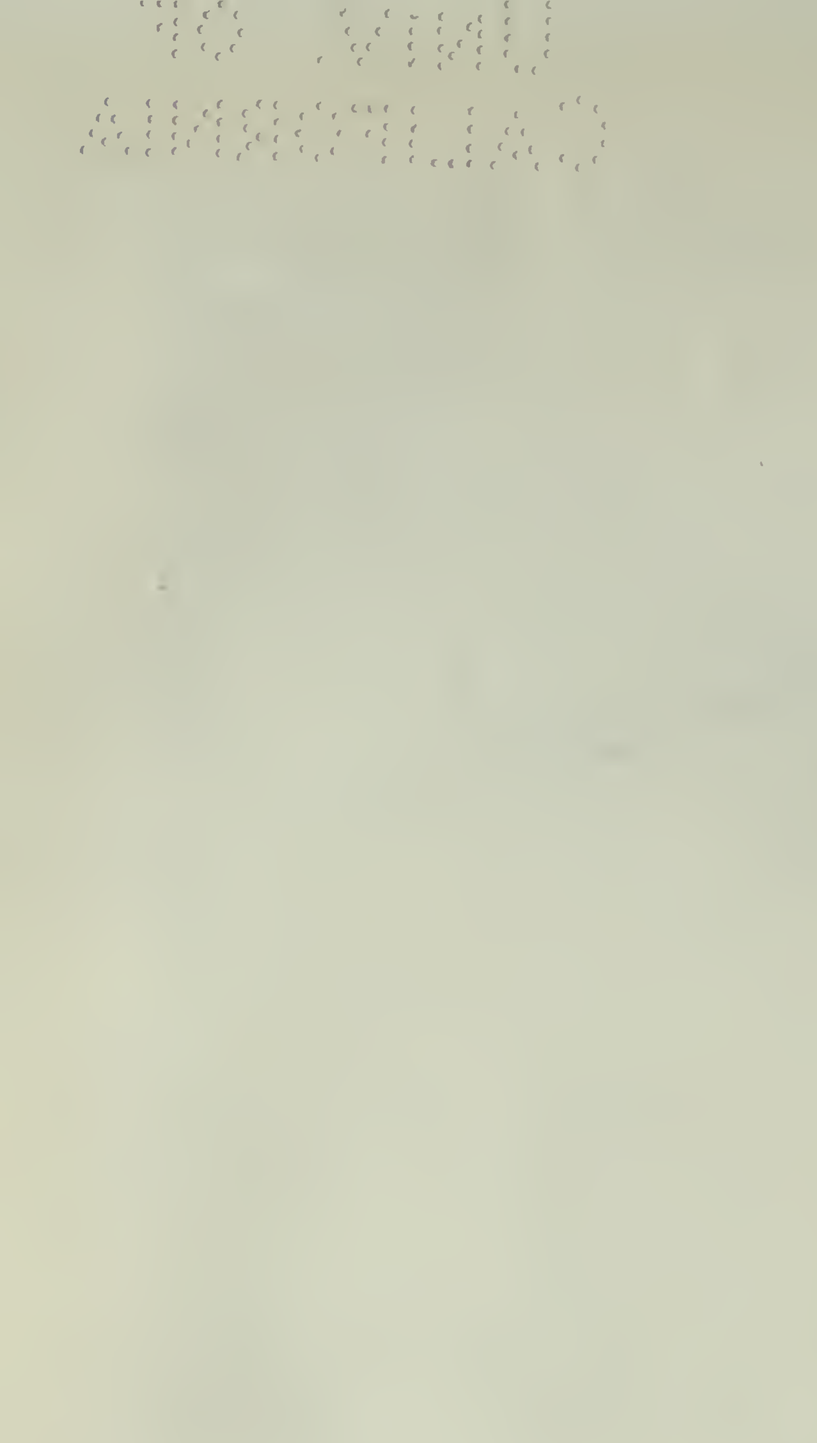
Do not fail in passing to notice the watch towers in the vineyards along this way, for such towers found here and there all over Palestine have supplied much Bible imagery, and were mentioned by our Lord in the story of the man who "planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen" (Matt. xxi. 33). If you look carefully you may discern an ancient winepress in some vineyard.

Bethlehem is "a city set on a hill." You never realise this more than from the great terrace of the Franciscan monastery where you look sheer down into the green valley beneath. The monks will point out to you the "Field of the Shepherds" about a mile distant far below, where, in the Crusaders' time, stood the Church of the Gloria in Excelsis, of which to-day only an underground chapel remains. More to the north-east is a little plain still known as the



BETHLEHEM FROM FRANCISCAN MONASTERY.

[*Face p.* 74



Field of Boaz, where Ruth once gleaned among the corn. To the west the flat-roofed Eastern houses climb the hillside—beautiful is the town seen from this point, when the rosy glow of sunrise or sunset illumines the white buildings: to the north the road to Jerusalem winds over the hills.

On the night that it was my good fortune to sleep at Bethlehem — the eve of Palm Sunday—a star of dazzling brilliancy shone in the clear sky above the "Field of the Shepherds," making all others pale before it. Just such a star I thought must have led the Magi to this spot!

I had been shown the Church of the Nativity earlier in the day, but after dusk had fallen I visited the Grotto once more alone.

It is the greatest irony in Christendom that Moslem soldiers stand on guard in the Sacred Grotto to prevent the Greek, Latin, and Armenian Christians, who are the joint guardians of the shrine, from infringing on each other's rights!

What, I wonder, are the thoughts of these khaki-clad, red-fezzed soldiers of the Sultan as they pass to and fro! I was alone for a time in the Grotto with the silent sentinel. I wished to kneel a little while in prayer, the Mohammedan presence jarred at first, but soon I became oblivious of it. Why should I mind a Moslem witnessing my act of worship, when I have so often watched the followers of the prophet prostrating themselves when the muezzin called the hour of prayer?

I was not long alone; many women of Bethlehem, stately figures with long white veils worn over their high head-dresses, ornamented with strings of coins—unmarried women wear the veil alone—came to kiss the silver star that marks the traditional site of the Sacred Birth. It is but tradition, yet the star is dear to these simple souls! For me it was enough to know that somewhere near by the spot on which I stood the heavenly Child was born, and the Magi offered in this cave their symbolic gifts of



A STREET STUDY IN BETHLEHEM. [Face p. 76

gold, frankincense, and myrrh! Strangers to the East looking for a "stable," as the West understands the word, are unprepared to find it in a rock-hewn cave; but such stables as this were common in Palestine, and mangers may still be seen in them showing their former use. The Grotto at Bethlehem is indeed the most satisfying of all sacred sites; of it Colonel Conder wrote after his survey of Palestine: "the rude Grotto with its rocky manger may, it seems to me, be accepted even by the most sceptical of modern explorers." Here, at least, there is no controversy. This is almost the only site which we can trace earlier than the time of Constantine. The "khan" or "inn" of our New Testament version was known to Justin Martyr in the second century, and would be the same where St Jerome spent so many years of his life engaged on the Vulgate translation of the Scriptures. This gloomy rock-cut cell may be seen to-day, for the "khans" on the great caravan roads never altered their position century after

century, so the "khan" that St Jerome knew could not be other than that which sheltered Joseph and Mary. The basilica Constantine erected over it seems to have always miraculously escaped destruction when other churches, including the Holy Sepulchre, were overthrown. Christians might see in this Divine Protection of the birthplace of our Lord a proof of the spuriousness of other sites, for the basilica at Bethlehem is the only undisputed erection of the time of Constantine that has come down to us; it adds to its deep interest that its general plan is that of the original Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is impossible not to feel the deepest reverence for a building in which men have worshipped since the fourth century! The low door, hardly four feet high, by which you enter the basilica, reminds you that it belonged to the age of persecution when the smaller the entry the easier to defend. The Latin mass on Palm Sunday in this ancient church, when crowds of white veiled women communicated,

was one of the most impressive scenes I saw in the Holy Land.

Bethlehem has the unique distinction of being entirely Christian, yet no stranger would guess it from the appearance of the men, for here they wear the picturesque turban, elsewhere the headgear of the Moslem. All the people of this town are fine looking, the women often handsome, and the place wears an air of prosperity that is probably due to the absence of the blighting influence of Mohammedanism, which, though many of its precepts are excellent, seems in practice to have a stagnating influence. The open square before the monastery at Bethlehem presents one of the busiest and most picturesque scenes imaginable. Long trains of camels come in with merchandise from the desert roads, for the "great and terrible wilderness" is very near to the olive groves and gardens of Bethlehem. The great tawny beasts with their pathetic eyes are a feature of the gay coloured crowd made up of

country-folk and townspeople, some on foot and some on donkeys, and, mingling with them in the Palestine season, generally a sprinkling of tourists of divers nations. Steep, stony paths lead from the little town down into the fertile valley, and then up other hills from which Bethlehem is seen to advantage. These hills are all clothed with olive trees and vineyards, and dotted with the "watch towers" so often mentioned in the Bible. Fig trees, too, are frequent, and when we were there they had just reached the stage described by our Lord: "When his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is nigh."

Few travellers leave Bethlehem without turning aside to see the traditional Well of David, and recall the story of his three mighty men who "broke through the host of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate," and brought to King David the drink he craved, but poured out as an oblation to the Lord because he would not satisfy his thirst

at so great a price, "For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it."

Not far from Bethlehem on the way to Jerusalem is another Bible landmark—one of the most pathetic in all Palestine, for the little white dome, honoured alike by Christian, Jew, and Moslem, is the "Pillar of Rachel's grave," set up by the wayside where she died in childbirth by the husband who loved her so well that he served twice seven years to win her. Over the lapse of ages this very human story has power to touch us. As we stand by Rachel's grave, Jacob the Bible patriarch is forgotten in Jacob the sorrowing husband of this love story of long ago with its untimely end. Little wonder that Benjamin, the child that Rachel gave him with her life, was Jacob's best beloved son! And every Friday the Jews recall it when they come to pray at Rachel's grave.

Bethlehem, anciently called Ephrath, the Fruitful, is first mentioned in the record of Rachel's death (Gen. xxv. 19), but it is a

place of many memories—the history of Ruth and Boaz centres around it; here Samuel came to anoint David King, and many of his descendants dwelt here; and here, long afterwards in the "City of David," was born his greatest Son.

It seemed a natural sequence to Bethlehem to go another day to Ain Karim, called by the Roman Church St Jean du Désert, the birthplace and early home of John the Baptist, the lovely hill village where Mary visited Elizabeth, and was greeted with the prophetic words: "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" The Church of the Magnificat commemorates the Virgin's inspired utterance so familiar to us in the English translation, which is still the triumph song of Christianity — "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden, for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

The grotto in the church may or may not



"AIN KARIM," BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

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have been John the Baptist's birthplace, the probabilities surely are against it, for we have no reason to suppose that Elizabeth's child would be born elsewhere than in her own home, and it is most probable that some early Christians, enamoured of the idea of a similitude between the circumstances of the birth of the Christ and his great forerunner, let their imagination run away with them. What is of deepest interest to us at Ain Karim is that the Virgin dwelt here with Elizabeth for three quiet months before her child was born; that this fair scene of terraced hillsides, vines, and olive trees perched above the valley, daily met her eyes and influenced her thoughts, that here the two women must have talked of the mysteries dimly revealed to them, and Mary, the simple village maid, drew strength and courage and wisdom in communion with God for what lay before her not alone at Bethlehem but in the wondrous path she was to tread for the rest of her earthly life as the earthly guardian of her heavenly Son.

There is a well at Ain Karim, as at Nazareth, where all the women go at morn and eve to draw water for their household. Less famous, it is infinitely more beautifully situated and picturesque, and surely also deserves the name of the "Virgin's fountain," for I feel no doubt that Mary and Elizabeth drew water here and chatted with their neighbours just as the women of the village were doing when I lingered for an hour to watch them passing to and fro with stately carriage and graceful water jars carried on their heads. There is no other well in Ain Karim, and the customs of the East are unchanging.

At the Franciscan convent we were greeted by an Irish monk who made us so kindly welcome that we lingered long drinking his tea and talking of the "old country." The courtesy and kindness shown by the monks in Palestine to those who are not of their own faith deserves all praise. It is a hospitable tradition of the Middle Ages that is very pleasing, and, as the monastic orders

are composed of men of all nations, Englishman, Frenchman, German, or Italian, can at the larger establishments invariably find some one who speaks their mother tongue.

Even though you cannot always accept Roman traditions, it is infinitely preferable to be shown the sacred sites of tradition by those who reverence them overmuch than by an indifferent guide or loquacious dragoman!

CHAPTER VI

DOWN TO JERICHO

THE way that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho, for ever immortalised by our Lord as the scene of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, had a peculiar fascination for me. Often before we really started for Jericho, I walked to a point beyond the city where the road was visible for a long distance going "down" to the mysterious desert region of the Dead Sea. Once we walked as far as Bethany which lies along the road, though it may also be reached over the Mount of Olives. From my childhood I had pictured that road as running through dark woods that afforded hiding-places for robbers, but it is altogether treeless. Nevertheless the hiding-places are



BEDOUIN ON THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO.

[*Face p.* 86

there in the holes and caves in the rock between which the highway runs, and the robbers, too, are there, for the district around the comparatively modern inn of the Good Samaritan on the traditional site is still infested with lawless Bedouins, so that travellers, until very recently, were advised to take a guard, and it is still considered somewhat unsafe to leave the high road, not without reason, as our own experience showed. On photographing thoughts intent and unattended by a dragoman, we wandered one day in the direction of Bethany and turned aside following a shepherd leading his flock, who seemed to be making straight for some "green pastures" in the distance, and raised our hopes of a long-sought Bible picture. Away from the high road the man turned on us, and demanded "baksheesh," and attempted to seize the camera, which might have suffered in the scuffle if nothing worse had happened; but our lucky star was in the ascendant, for along the unfrequented track that joined the high road

at a little distance at this very moment a Turkish officer came riding, who doubtless knew us by sight, as we had previously seen him at our hotel. He took in the situation at a distance and sent one of his escort to our assistance, who promptly reduced the shepherd to order, and did not leave us till he saw us safely back on the main road.

I confess to some disappointment at Bethany. The rather unattractive village street with its Russian church is not the sweet peaceful spot one pictures as the home of Martha and Mary, and the loved resort of Jesus. It may have wholly altered in character since the time of our Lord. Perhaps, then, it offered the shade of fig or olive trees so grateful in this barren land. We know many trees have vanished under the Turkish *régime*, on account of excessive taxation, which has succeeded in "killing the goose that laid the golden eggs."

The house of Simon the leper (where

Jesus sat at meat, when Mary brought her box of precious ointment to anoint His feet) is pointed out, as well as that of Martha and Mary, and the grave of Lazarus. But none of these sites are likely to be authentic, other than that of Bethany itself, which is the exact distance from Jerusalem mentioned by St Luke, fifteen furlongs or one and three quarter miles of our reckoning. It seems a very long mile and three quarters indeed, when you toil up hill through the gorge where the sun's rays are reflected by the rocks on either side, and on this road you are sure to meet at certain hours of the day a hideous procession of carcasses of dead animals slung over the backs of live ones on their way from the public slaughter-houses that is enough to make any sensitive people abjure flesh eating on the spot. I fancy the ranks of vegetarians and fruitarians would be largely recruited if some of us could be forced to witness the horrors of the slaughter-house. There is so much truth in the old maxim that

"what the eye sees not the heart grieves not."

I crave my reader's pardon for this intrusion by the way, into a subject alien to this book, but very near to my heart, but I cannot recall the road to Jericho without recalling the Bible verse, "where the carcase is there will the eagles be gathered together," and seeing again in memory the great birds of prey hovering over the slaughter-houses—those buildings a little aside from the main road where poor sub-humans are daily sacrificed, not as of old to propitiate deity, but to satisfy the appetites of humanity. And this suggests another thought less alien to this book, for it concerns a modern development of Jerusalem which does all honour to the young Turks, who, if not the instigators, have given, at least, support to the establishment about a year ago of a local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in what was formerly described as "the cruellest place in the world." It is but the thin edge of the wedge, by far the larger half

of Jerusalem still shrugs its shoulders when you preach the gospel of kindness to dumb creatures; but though donkey drivers as yet have a hazy notion of the meaning of this new order of things, and think they may beat their long-suffering beasts as much as they please *outside* the city, as long as they are on their best behaviour at the Jaffa Gate (near the Animals' Hospital and Inspectors' office) the wedge is being slowly driven in. A new standard of morality has been presented which must have an uplifting influence upon humans as well as benefiting sub-humans, for the first time recognised as having any rights, and I would appeal very earnestly to all who may read this little book and visit Palestine to support the new society in its humane work by examining the condition of the animals they ride, and reporting cases of cruelty to the special police whose duty it now is to investigate them. Knowledge of Arabic is not necessary here—gestures are eloquent enough to show the condition of

a lame horse or sore backed donkey, if your dragoman be not at hand to interpret. It may cost a little time and trouble to send the suffering animal to the hospital and wait till another is brought you; but if every tourist in Palestine would take this stand, a new era would be inaugurated. It is for English people who pride themselves on their humanity towards animals to lead the van in a movement to remove an evil which not only affects the animals, but spoils Palestine for animal lovers.

There was unconscious irony in the reply of one of the English officials of the Society to my query as to whether the majority of visitors to the Holy City gave a helping hand. He said they were "too much interested in religious questions." Yet One who lived long ago in this land told His followers that God cared for the sparrows, and surely it is true

> "He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small."

Oh! the sufferings of the beasts of burden

on that road that climbs 3,500 feet from Jericho to Jerusalem! Many fall by the way overladen and overdriven in the heat of the Wilderness of Judea through which it first winds — for them it is truly a Via Dolorosa.

The inn of the Good Samaritan lies about half-way between Jerusalem and Jericho, though it has little interest in itself apart from its site. The halt there made by all carriages gives an opportunity to climb the hillside to a point a little distant from the crowd of tourists and natives generally to be found at the half-way house, and there, seated on the scanty turf, try to picture the familiar Bible story—the poor wounded man riding upon the ass, supported by the good Samaritan, arriving at the ancient "khan" or inn that occupied the place of the modern one.

If you are interested in the observing types of human nature, half an hour passes very quickly at the inn of the Good Samaritan, for the Russian pilgrims, almost always to

be seen here, are a study in themselves, immensely picturesque in their high fur caps, top boots and long-belted coats, with little bundles from which they produce their midday meal of a hunch of black bread. Sometimes you hear them singing hymns, but that is more commonly on the march, and very solemn and touching their voices sound echoing among the hills.

The last part of the descent into the plain of Jericho is the wildest, and the road the steepest; if in a carriage, you suffer a succession of jerks even when the road is in tolerable condition; after rain it must be terrible, but above all things the excursion to Jericho is to be avoided during the sirocco. We unfortunately came in for this experience, and though this hot wind has a most enervating effect everywhere that I have experienced it, whether on the banks of the Nile or in the mountain valleys of Switzerland, where it is met in a modified aspect under the name of the Föhn, I have never anywhere felt its hot

breath so intolerable as in the Jordan valley and the plain by the Dead Sea. If climate affects character, it is little wonder that the distinguishing feature of the inhabitants of Jericho was that they lay down their arms or ran away before every army that assaulted it from the time of Joshua to that of Vespasian.

The history of Jericho is not a little puzzling, for there have been three Jerichos—that great city of which the walls fell down before the Israelites was, undoubtedly, as Colonel Conder, who lived for months in this plain while engaged on his survey of Palestine, first pointed out, built around the spring of which Elisha healed the waters, when he returned to the city after witnessing the translation of Elijah. It is the natural place for a city as it has the only good water supply in the district anywhere near, but Joshua's curse forbade this Jericho to be rebuilt, so the Jericho that was the "city of palm trees," given by Anthony to Cleopatra, and became so

magnificent when Herod had his winter palace there, arose at the foot of the mountains guarding the entrance from the plains to the hill country of Judea.

The Canaanite city has since been partly excavated by the Germans, who published some interesting details of their work in 1907 and 1908,[1] of which a full account is given in the *Palestine Exploration Funds Quarterly Statement for* 1910. This tells of a great wall which is a triumph of engineering that could hardly be excelled by a modern builder under similar conditions, enclosing an elevated area of about twelve acres, and, of course, including the water supply. The walls of Canaanite Jericho, with their towers and citadel, must have been visible for a great distance across the plain, and might well have dismayed the hearts of the Israelites who cannot have had any human weapons other

[1] "Mittheil u. Nachricht d. deutschen, Pal. Vereins," 1907, and "Mittheil d. deutsche, Orient Gesellschaft zu Berlin," December 1908, No. 38.

than the most primitive, so that they would stand towards the Canaanites in an even less favourable position than the Arabs of to-day towards a foe armed with weapons of modern warfare. Their victory was wholly a moral victory and vindication of their trust in God. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down" (Heb. xi. 30). It must be admitted that the German reports which are, however, incomplete, do not entirely agree with the interpretation generally put upon the Bible story related in the first chapters of Joshua that the whole walls fell down, for according to the evidence of the excavators the walls were not entirely overthrown, but the Scripture actually says, "the wall fell down." It is nowhere said that it was the *whole* wall or walls. In another respect the result of the excavations is to bear out the Scriptural account of the Israelites' history, for the Canaanite pottery suddenly ceases at Jericho, whereas in other parts of Palestine it develops into the Israelite.

This seems to confirm the total destruction of the inhabitants of the city. The site excavated is not far from the modern village of Eriha. To the west rises Jebel Karental, "the mountain to which the Israelitish spies might easily have fled through the intervening cane jungle and thorn groves."[1] About five miles to the east flows the Jordan.

Coming from Jerusalem we reached first the site of Herod's city, and climbed a little hill, surmounted by some ruined walls and heaps of stones, that once formed part of its glorious buildings. Once again memory was busy with Bible history, conjuring up out of the traces of ruins scattered about the plain, and the better preserved reservoirs and aqueducts, the aspect of the great and flourishing city with its villas of Roman nobles, its luxurious public baths, its teeming population, its pleasure seekers and idlers, its money grubbers and workers, and its Pharisaical Judaism that murmured against our Lord

[1] Colonel Conder, "Tent Work in Palestine."

when he went in to lodge with the publican Zacchæus, "a man that is a sinner."

It is easier, much easier, to realise history —not excepting Bible history—among the actual scenes in which it happened. Sitting here on this little eminence, looking towards the north, imagination paints the scene that formed a prelude to the last days in Jerusalem, the multitude crossing the plain from the Jordan, surrounding one Figure distinguished from all the rest by a dignity of bearing that the dress of the peasant cannot hide. We seem to hear the shouts that reached the ears of blind Bartemæus as he sat by the wayside begging, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," and brought the answering cry from the afflicted man, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." We see the little procession halt, because that cry has reached the ears of One "ever more ready to hear than we to pray," and the disciples who, less loving than their Master, would have stifled it, commanded to bring the sufferer to Jesus. Once more the

voice of Bartemæus is upraised, but this time it is to give thanks, for the impossible has happened—he *sees* and glorifies God, and now a murmur rises from the crowd growing more and more in volume till it breaks into a pæan of rejoicing, "And all the people when they saw it gave praise unto God." The vision fades, and we go on our way to the modern Jericho, called by the Arabs Eriha, which lies between the ancient sites. Our road runs beside a little stream which is actually the brook Cherith, familiar to us from childhood for its associations with Elijah. Not here though was the prophet's hiding-place, but in the wild gorge of Wady Kelt, through which the Cherith runs before it leaves the hills, and which we visited on our return journey to Jerusalem. Approaching the Arab village—known to us as Jericho—which, in the twelfth century, grew around the Crusading tower, seen a little to the south, I noticed for the first time the hedges of spiky thorn called Spina Christi from the tradition that, of this plant which

grows in thick hedges around Jericho, the cruel Crown of Thorns was woven.

Vegetation is luxuriant in this little oasis in the desert, and plants and flowers are doubly welcome when you come from the barren hill country of Judea, and only a mile or so distant, the "great and terrible wilderness" enfolds you on all sides. Bananas, oleanders, bamboos, and date-palms with many tropical trees and plants strange to my eyes, grow luxuriantly in the gardens of Jericho. At even you may see the natives sitting beneath their vines and fig trees, and recall how "Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree," while the languorous hothouse scent of flowers, always stronger as darkness gathers, intoxicates your senses. Yet tempting as the gardens were to the eye, the stifling sand-laden breath of the sirocco drove us in to the hotel where tourists, who had breakfasted at an unaccustomed hour soon after sunrise, were steadily plodding through an elaborate lunch, regardless of the

thermometer. Turning a deaf ear to the solicitations of our host to join them, we lunched in our own room, overlooking a thicket of bamboos with a glimpse of the wilderness beyond, on the sandwiches and fruit we had brought with us from Jerusalem. Our lunch was interrupted by an Arab boy bringing a beautiful bird he had just captured (and in so doing maimed) for us to purchase. This presented a problem hard of solution, for if we bought the bird to set it free, we encouraged the practice of catching birds to sell to tourists; if we refused we almost certainly condemned the feathered captive to torture by the village boys. The only solution that occurred to us was to refuse to let our guide who brought the bird to us, take it back to its captor and set it free at nightfall when it would have a chance of escaping its enemies. I am afraid though our action failed of its moral lesson from our inability to explain to the lad the error of his ways in the native tongue, for I feel sure the dragoman did not interpret what

we told him, and I fear the ignorant lad who caught the bird will always believe we cheated him of his rights. I never regretted my want of Arabic more than when I desired to plead the cause of the animals with the natives!

Remembering the witchery of the Egyptian desert by moonlight, we had timed our visit to Jericho to be there for the full moon and drive by moonlight back from the Dead Sea. The programme was excellent, but it was shorn of its glory by the sirocco which increased so much that on our way to the Jordan the landscape was partly blotted out by what looked like a thick mist, but was actually sand in the air, and not even the immense interest of these scenes of Bible history could overcome the overpowering languor we all felt, while photography was out of the question on account of the complete absence of light and shade. The wind increased almost to a gale, but there was no relief from the heat in it, and one's skin felt parched and cracked as if

by the opposite condition of piercing cold.

We forgot the discomfort for a time in the interest of our first sight of the Jordan; the green of the thick jungle of tamarisk, oleander, and willow, mingled with bamboo which fringes the banks, was most grateful to our eyes, and we sat down by the river's brink to gaze our full while our driver followed a time-honoured custom by decorating our carriage with boughs of greenery. Each carriage that has been to the sacred stream returns thus adorned to Jerusalem, and few are the tourists who fail to fill their bottles with Jordan water.

Tradition asserts that the Israelites crossed the Jordan near to the present ford, having come down from the mountains of Moab by the Wady Hesban. Here, then, the waters parted before the feet of the priests that bare the Ark of the Lord, and were cut off till all the host had passed over; and here they parted once more at the command first of Elijah and afterwards of Elisha. The

fords of the Jordan present a remarkable sight on the Monday of Holy Week, when thousands of pilgrims who have slept in the open on the site of Gilgal cross the plain before dawn to be baptized in Jordan. It must add much to the beauty and interest of the scene that the pilgrims enter the water at sunrise, and the first golden rays of day illumine this strange scene. Many of them are aged men and women to whom the shock of the cold water in the chill of the early morning might well be fatal, but religious exaltation has made them immune from laws of health. Sustained by a fervour of enthusiasm they march back triumphantly, up the many hours of toilsome ascent to Jerusalem. It is said that every Christian country of Europe and Asia is represented among the pilgrims who annually bathe in Jordan in Holy Week.

The sirocco prevented us visiting Gilgal—the first spot where the Israelites pitched their tents in the Promised Land. It would have been useless, for the famous view of

the great plain of Jericho and Quarantania (which has been known since the twelfth century as the place where our Lord spent the forty days of fasting in the wilderness) was blotted out by the sand which filled the air. The site of Gilgal was fixed authoritatively by Colonel Conder when he surveyed the valley of the Jordan for the Palestine Exploration Fund; it accords with the Bible account that it was "in the east border of Jericho" (Josh. iv. 19), and it is interesting that it has been held in reverence by the natives from time immemorial. The Bedouin burial-place close by was chosen by these "children of the desert" in accordance with their custom to bury their dead, if possible, in or near consecrated ground. The modern name of Gilgal, Shejeret el Ithleh, "the tamarisk tree," comes from the ancient tree near the ruins of a Byzantine monastery which formerly stood upon the spot, and in the surrounding mounds ancient glass and pottery of this period have been found.

There is a Bedouin tradition about the

site of Gilgal which has most interesting reference to two episodes in the life of Joshua. Whether tradition handed them down from Israelitish time and the Mohammedan invasion changed the names, or whether it is a Crusading legend altered and perpetuated by the natives, is an open question. This is the story :—

"By the old tamarisk once stood the City of Brass, which was inhabited by Pagans. When Mohammeds' creed began to spread, Aly, his son-in-law, 'the lion of God,' arrived at the city, and rode seven times round it on his horse, Maemûn. The brazen walls fell down, destroyed by his breath, and the Pagans fled, pursued by the Faithful towards Kuruntul; but the day drew to a close and darkness threatened to shield the infidels. Then Aly, standing on a hill which lies due east of the Kuruntul crag, called out to the sun: 'Come back, O blessed one!' And the sun returned in heaven, so that the hill has ever since been called 'The ridge of the return.'"[1]

[1] Colonel Conder, "Tent Work in Palestine."

It was late afternoon when we stood on the shores of the Dead Sea, but the heat was still intense, indeed it hardly seemed to diminish all through the breathless, sleepless night. Modern research has told us that the buried cities of the plain cannot, as was once thought, lie beneath these waters, but may be buried far beneath the sand in the plain to the east or to the north. The steep cliffs to the south-east are the land of the Ammonites where Zoar, the "little city" to which Lot escaped, is now fixed. From Mount Nebo, the Pisgah of the Bible, Moses viewed the Promised Land "and all the land of Judah unto the hinder sea, and the south, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar."

The blue mountains of Moab held an enduring fascination for me. It was hard to be so near to where they rose across the salt water and go no further, but the country east of Jordan is a wild land, never safe to travel in without an escort, and

particularly unsettled at the time of our visit —how much worse it may be now no one can tell! It matters no more whether the cities of the plain lie under the Dead Sea, as the Mohammedans believe, or to the south as the Crusaders thought, or to the east which was the conclusion of the Palestine Exploration Fund's Survey Party, or to the north which is the latest theory, than what is the actual site of the Holy Sepulchre. Somewhere in that great plain on which we stand, stood those doomed cities before the great volcanic upheaval of which scientists have found undisputed proof, coinciding with the Bible account of their destruction. Recent exploration reports tell us that the sulphur springs which stud the shores of the lake, and the enormous quantities of sulphur and bitumen strewn over the plain all point to a great convulsion of Nature some thousands of years ago, and that the kindling of such a mass of combustible material, either by lightning from heaven or by some other electrical agency, combined with an earth-

quake ejecting the bitumen or sulphur from the lake, would soon spread devastation over the plain; so that "the smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace" (Gen. xix. 28), would be an exact description of what happened.

It is a solemn thought to remember that overwhelming catastrophe which was here enacted as you stand by the lonely shores of the Dead Sea. The blight that rests on this once fair land is the result of sin, and it reaches unto this day. Some will ask, "Have no remains of Sodom and Gomorrah been found—not such as at Pompeii, where excavations have been systematically carried on, but some such trifles as coins or broken pottery turned up by a peasant's plough?" The answer is "No!" Colonel Conder rode day by day for months, over almost every acre of ground between Jericho and the Dead Sea, and found no ruin but the old monastery of St John and a hermit's cave; but as he reminds us in his "Tent Work," "to expect to find their ruins is manifestly to disregard

the Bible history, and even had they not been overthrown, what hope could there be of their preservation at the present time, when the buildings of Herod, nineteen centuries later, are not now in existence." Yet he traced in some of the local names a connection with likely sites that is sufficient for us to look at these spots with reverence. The desolate gorge known to the Arabs as "the Valley of Fire" (a name in itself suggestive) in which the monastery of Mar Saba is situated, has near to its mouth a great bluff called "Tubk Amriyeh," and "Amriyeh" is radically identical with Gomorrah. The water supply essential to a great city is there in the famous perennial spring of Ain el Teshkhan, and a smaller spring close by on the shores of the Dead Sea. True the water of these springs to-day is brackish and sulphurous, but it may have been as sweet three thousand years ago as the waters of the fountain healed by Elisha at Eriha are to-day. The early Christians who labelled everything, naturally found in the

curious crag, a few miles distant from this spot, called by the Arabs Kurnet Sahsul Hameid, which somewhat resembles a human figure, the petrified remains of Lot's wife. Is it not possible that a person struck by lightning may have been petrified by some forces of Nature, and the body coated with lava remained buried in an upright posture in the *débris*? We are learning every day more respect for the "miracles" of the Old Testament, which it was the fashion not many years ago to discredit as fairy tales, or, at best, mere allegories written for a childlike people.

The wilderness around the shores of the Dead Sea is a white wilderness, even the driftwood on the shores is bleached by the action of the salt. As evening fell the dreariness of the land was indescribable, the moon rose, but so thick was the haze in the air caused by the sand, it shed only a dim light upon the track by which we returned to Jericho through the plain "full of slime pits," which is one of the best evidences

that here is the Vale of Siddim. The sirocco has an extraordinary effect upon the nervous system; it fills you unless you resolutely fight against it with a nameless fear, a sense of foreboding that is altogether unaccountable, and here in the wilderness, where so many thousands of evil-doers perished by the visitation of God, with night already fallen and no human habitation nearer than the far-off houses of Jericho, whose lights were dimly visible across the plain, we felt decidedly inclined to start at our shadows. The anchorites who made their homes in the caves of this desert must have had iron nerves, or a sublime faith in Divine protection.

It seemed strange to come out of this land of shadows and mystery, from thoughts of times of Abraham and Lot and the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, into the hotel garden, with its lights and groups of tourists taking supper under the trees in the open air. I had to rub my eyes to ascertain if I were awakening from a dream.

It did not take very long, however, to decide that there was nothing dreamlike in our hunger, and soon we were in as festive a mood as a temperature still in the nineties permitted, and somewhat relieved to find ourselves back in the twentieth century! A yellow pariah dog, with such lovely white teeth that he recalled to me the Moslem story of our Lord's divine compassion, came to share our supper. The story is charming and worth relating for the sake of those who may not have heard it before. A dead dog lay putrefying by the roadside— a common enough sight in the East. The passers - by spurned it with their feet. "Unclean beast," said one, shuddering. "Carrion," said another, and all averted their gaze from the loathsome sight till One passed by full of compassion Who found a kindly word even for a dead dog. He stopped and His gaze fell upon it, and He alone found something to praise amid the foulness. "See what beautiful white teeth he has," was His kindly comment.

Our pariah, like all his race, was very shy, fearful of coming within range of stones, watching for an opportunity to steal when the garden should be deserted. He fled from the first bone we threw him, believing it a stone, but his keen nose soon detected that no stone had ever so savoury a smell, and hunger drove him to approach it, seize it, and then disappear into the darkness! The next tit-bit was thrown a little nearer to our table, and so by degrees, gazing furtively around each moment and dodging his foes, the Arab servants, he came at the conclusion of the meal almost within reach. I think in the course of a few days he would have learned to feed out of my hand. The howls of his brethren in the village came to us all through the sleepless hours of the tropic night.

Sunrise found us on our way back to Jerusalem, having made a start at this unearthly hour to escape from the Jordan Valley before the power of the sun made itself felt. Where the hills meet the plain

some of us alighted to traverse on foot the wild ravine where tradition asserts that Elijah was fed by the ravens. It is almost a pity that this charming story is now explained away by some people who could not conceive of God's Divine Love working through the fowls of the air, on the ground that Orebim, signifying "ravens," is also the name of an Arab tribe in the district, who take their name from a prominent mountain peak known to the Arabs as Osh el Ghoreb or "the Raven's Nest." Materialists will naturally find it much easier to believe that Elijah was fed by the Arabs than by birds, but those who know the intelligence of our sub-human friends will hesitate to discard the old version. If we accept the parting of the waters, why should we discredit the feeding of God's prophet by the ravens?

To follow the track that led through Wady Kelt we had to cross the brook Cherith, which we waded after removing our shoes and stockings. Once within the

ravine, we were rewarded for our enterprise in walking through this superb gorge and pitied those left in the carriage. Wady Kelt has been described as "one of the most sublime ravines in Palestine," personally I should think that its combined charms of association and scenery are hardly equalled in the world, and we saw it under ideal conditions, for the sirocco was over and the sun was struggling for mastery with the clouds which still hung in fantastic forms over the Jordan Valley, of which we had backward glimpses framed in between precipitous cliffs nearly five hundred feet high. Perhaps the great convulsion that swallowed up the cities of the plain rent asunder this chasm in the mountains. At the bottom where the sparkling stream winds its way like a silver thread in a green ribbon, fringed by reeds and rushes, and bushes of oleander, the walls of rock are scarcely twenty yards apart. Our path was that trodden by the hermits and anchorites, who here dwelt in the caves which honeycomb the cliffs from remotest

ages; it ran along a ledge in the rocks hundreds of feet above the stream, and is now little used, I fancy, except by the monks from the monastery in the gorge which is built into the living rock like that at Mar Saba. As we wound our way more and more into the mountains, the cliffs soared up in most fantastic forms, and at one point looking back to Jericho it appeared exactly as if a mediæval fortress crowned the rock. More than once we noticed eagles soaring overhead who seemed to be keeping their eyes upon the humans who had invaded their sanctuary, lest their eyries should be despoiled of eggs or young, and once we came upon a picturesque group of Russian pilgrims on their way to the monastery. It was a scene that would have made an artist's fortune to depict it truly, for the pilgrims were seated on a projecting rock so that the group was silhouetted against a misty background of mountains from which the clouds were just lifting, and they were figures out of the past with long

hair and beards, and beautiful full faces of intense earnestness and wrapt emotion, just such as one pictures in the hermits of the early Christian era and Middle Ages. The monastery which is dedicated to the anchorite St John of Choseboth, was visible long before we came to it—an extraordinary pile of building which looks as if it were entirely cut out of the rock. The situation is immensely picturesque, for at this point the gorge widens and immediately below the monastery a tangle of luxurious vegetation, out of which rose blossoming fruit trees and palms, made the valley a little Paradise at the spot where our path descended to the stream and crossed it by a bridge before it again ascended steeply to join the main road where the carriage waited for us. At the top I stopped and looked back regretfully. Why were we bound onwards when it would have been so good to linger? The monks would have given us lodging. We might have listened to the music of the Cherith

on its way to the plain, and drank in the silence of the hills, and penetrated into the caves where the anchorites dwelt long, long ago, and perhaps caught something of the spirit which drove them from this world to pray for those who could not or would not pray for themselves. We might all unknowingly have entered the very cave once inhabited by Elijah. All this we would have done had we but known what awaited us in the Wady Kelt, but we did not know till too late—it is not in the tourist's itinerary—but at least we caught a fleeting glimpse, and maybe one day we shall return to the brook Cherith and follow it again to the plain.

CHAPTER VII

TOWARDS THE NORTH

The day approached on which we were to bid "Good-bye" to Jerusalem, and set our faces to the north towards the childhood home of our Lord and the scenes of His wonderful ministry. It seems to me that in the coming time Jerusalem will mean less to us than Galilee — the death of Jesus less than His life of love at Nazareth and on the shores of the Galilean lake. As we know in life too well, it is not the supreme sacrifices that are so difficult, as the meeting of the daily frets and jars, the daily shouldering of our burdens, and bearing them with smiling faces, so I think, and I say it in all reverence, believing it the little bit of Truth revealed to me, that the Sacrifice of Christ's life of

toil and hardship, embittered by the misunderstanding of those nearest and dearest to Him, the open hostility of the leaders of the Church He loved and revered, was greater than the sacrifice of the cruel felon's death to which His life of duty led Him—that we can learn more by meditating at Galilee than at Jerusalem! The angel's message—"Why seek ye the living among the dead?"—is surely still a message to those who, like the Crusaders of old, pay more attention to the cult of the Holy Sepulchre than that of the living Christ.

Because of thoughts like these, hardly expressed then even to myself, I had no great desire to spend the Holy Season of Easter at Jerusalem, and when it so fell out that our departure was postponed on account of unfavourable weather till after Easter Sunday, I preferred the familiar services at our own Collegiate Church of St George to the ornate ceremonies of the Roman Church at the Holy Sepulchre, and determined not to witness the great ceremony of the Holy

Fire at the Greek Easter, though tourists and pilgrims were flocking into the Holy City from all over the country to be present at the feast which dates back to the miraculous lighting of lamps in the time of the Christian kings of Jerusalem, but is known to every educated person to be an imposition on the credulity of the ignorant. It was one of those days of crystalline clearness that comes after a storm on which we set out for Nablûs, the Shechem of the Bible which was to be the first stage on our journey to Nazareth. After the rain ceased, which had fallen in torrents at Easter, we allowed two days for the roads to dry, and only a few little pools remained to tell of the quagmire they had been. From Mount Scopus we had our last sight of Jerusalem from the point it must have met the eyes of Jesus when year by year he went up from his Galilean home to Jerusalem for the feast.

Our road followed the old caravan route to Damascus, and led at first through a

barren country with little cultivation, but further on we came to olive groves through which it ran for miles, and the scenery became more and more beautiful and the land more fertile as we proceeded north. The road, too, was excellent. Some day not long distant I expect it will be extended to Galilee, and then when the restrictions about landing motor cars at Jaffa are removed, in the course of evolution of the new Turkish *régime*, this historic way through the heart of Bible land will no longer be so peaceful as it is to-day, but resound to the voice of so-called civilisation as represented by the hoot of the motor car.

We halted for the mid-day rest at a khan at the foot of a fine serpentine road, and enjoyed the lunch we had brought with us in the shadow of some bamboos that grew by a little stream in the apology for a garden, and afterwards gathered wild flowers while we waited for the horses to be put in. Glorious scarlet anemones grew by the roadside and in the corn-

fields, and recalled the poppies of our native land.

In the late afternoon we were skirting the base of Mount Gerizim, and just before we entered the lovely vale of Shechem our driver made us understand by signs (for we could communicate with him in no other language) that we were to alight. We knew at once that we must be close to Jacob's Well, for which we had been looking out, and followed a path leading to an enclosure which he indicated, and were at once admitted. Here we stood on one of the most authentic sites in Palestine, a "holy place" of remote antiquity mentioned in the writings of pilgrims in the fourth century, and the land all round us was "the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem."

One wonders why the digging of this deep well should have been undertaken by the patriarch at the mouth of a valley so rich in springs. The answer is that he wished to avoid contact with the people of

the land who visited the springs night and morning. Had the daughters of Israel resorted there also they might have been seen by the men of the country and lost their hearts to unbelievers. Joshua guarded against all that by having his own water supply! And how deep he dug you may judge to-day by letting a pebble drop into the spring and listening till you hear the splash when it reaches the water. In an old book relating the story of the travels in Palestine of a French priest in the eighteenth century, it is asserted that when he dropped his pebble in he recited "not very slowly yet not very fast" the Latin formula: "Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto: sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula," and heard the splash as he pronounced the last syllable.

Bible students will remember the words spoken by the women of Samaria to our Lord — "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep!" Every one must regret that the well has now been

enclosed in a church except, indeed, the Greeks who did it. Though they were not the first to err in this respect, for a plan exists of a church, erected over the well in the fourth century, which was destroyed at the invasion of Omar. When the well was open to the sky travellers could look up to Sychar, known to the Arabs as Iskar, the hillside village at the foot of Mount Ebal from which the "woman of Samaria" came, and picture her approaching and the Master watching her coming, knowing well her story, yet full of the divine compassion that stilled the accusers of another such poor woman with the startling words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

The low wall around the well is worn with the marks of ropes that have drawn up buckets century after century. Can it have survived two thousand years and the stones be actually those on which Christ rested when He was weary? Here He told to that simple woman, bred in the narrow

creed of the Samaritans, who asked Him if her own people were right who worshipped on Mount Gerizim, or the Jews who worshipped at Jerusalem, the truth that, humanly speaking, seemed so much in advance of her understanding (seeing that the world after two thousand years has not yet grasped it) that "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth"—yet she believed, and "many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman." In that mountain village our Lord abode two days—He a Jew living with a people hated and abhorred by the Jews even more than the Gentiles. According to the law, a Jew was actually forbidden to help a Samaritan, whether man or woman, in trouble, and even wine for the Temple was defiled and became unfit for use if it passed through Samaria. In those two days at Sychar the Master preached a practical lesson against class and race hatred.

Joseph's tomb near the well venerated

alike by Christians and Moslems reminded us that "the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem."

Dusk was falling as we entered the narrow valley between the mountains of Blessing and Cursing, but we were able to see that Nablûs clings to the slopes of Gerizim, and seems, as some one has said, to shrink from Mount Ebal "as if the Mount of Blessing and the Mount of Cursing bore out their titles to this day." It is an extraordinarily lovely and fertile valley this of Shechem—to the Israelites it must indeed have realised the promise: "a good land—a land of brooks and water, of fountains and depths springing forth in valleys and hills—a land of wheat, barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates —a land of oil, olives, and honey," and it leads to a city unequalled in beauty in the Holy Land—except by Damascus—which seems as if its central situation, wonderful water-supply from no less than eighty springs,

and sacred associations, entitled it to be the capital of Palestine rather than the bleak hill town of Judea.

Half-way up the valley we came to the two natural amphitheatres in the mountains that can be no other than the scene described in the book of Joshua. The six tribes whose leaders were to pronounce the blessings stood upon Mount Gerizim, and the six tribes whose leaders were to pronounce the curses upon Mount Ebal, while Joshua, the elders, and the priests, stood in the valley between. Tests have proved that the acoustic properties of this spot are such, that a man's clear voice can be easily heard from mountain to mountain. Here echoed the sonorous sentences of the law which God enjoined upon His people; here they trembled at the curse pronounced on evil doers; and on the mountain height above was reared the altar of God as Moses had commanded.

On Mount Gerizim still, year after year, the Samaritans eat the Passover; not as do the Jews, whose rites have altered from

those of the midnight meal in Egypt, but literally as was enjoined to their forefathers—"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste"—for we were told the roasted lambs are all consumed within ten minutes, and the remains destroyed by fire that "nothing remaineth till the morning."

We, unfortunately, missed this unique ceremony by a few days, through the rains detaining us in Jerusalem over Easter. It would have had a special interest for us, as we had happened one year, in the course of our wanderings, on the Greek Easter ceremonies at Corfu, which include the slaying of a lamb by each householder, and the "sprinkling" (which, however, here takes the form of making a cross) of the blood on the lintel and two door-posts—a copy of the Jewish rite which is most curiously and inconsistently followed up by the cursing of the Jews, emphasised by a shower of broken crockery (saved up during the year) from the upper windows!

But I am wandering from Nablûs, which we entered at nightfall, and found quarters—most comfortable, but painfully modern and unromantic—at the new Hamburg-American hotel, which owes its existence to the German Emperor's tour. A genial German host of the good old style welcomed us, and an excellent supper and good beds awaited us; but there are places in this world where sentiment would be preferable to creature comforts! It was not till I stood on the balcony in the starlit night, looking north up the valley towards Galilee, and saw the dark mountains towering above my head, that I could realise that this was Shechem—the oldest town in the Holy Land, with a history going back nearly four thousand years—that in this valley and on those mountain slopes Joseph's brethren fed their flocks, when he sought them and was himself sold by them into captivity—that this was one of the cities of refuge of ancient Israel, and is to-day the centre of Mohammedan fanaticism in Palestine, where the Christians

live on the edge of a volcano that may at any moment destroy them. We did not know it, but we were escaping danger by only a hair's breadth. A message had reached the Christian missionaries at the hospital of the disturbances at Jerusalem, following the violation of the Dome of the Rock. The Governor knew it, but he was a liberal man of the Young Turkish party, who might be relied upon to lend no help to fanaticism, and the common people did *not* know till a few days later. When the tidings reached them, no Christian was safe to cross the street without an escort! Our wanderings through the streets and bazaars of Nablûs, and our journey unattended through the mountains of Samaria, would have been impossible. Fanatical Nablûs sustained its reputation by sending a message to its co-religionists in India proposing a general rising—or in other words, a Holy War. I never heard how it was averted, and my whole sympathy goes out to the missionaries, whose work of overcoming

Moslem prejudice (which had so far advanced that they could go about the streets unmolested in European dress, where a few years ago to do so would have exposed them to attack) must have been thrown back years by this unfortunate affair. No matter what view the traveller takes about missions among the Moslems, no one can deny that the mission hospitals of Palestine are doing a noble work in alleviating human pain, and setting an example of men and women sacrificing their whole lives to bring to others what they believe is the best that they can give morally as well as physically. To travellers who approach them courteously, the missionaries, one and all, are most kind and courteous, and I shall not forget that one of the lady workers at the mission hospital at Nablûs gave up precious time to accompany us to Samaria, so that we might obtain entrance to the native houses, and that another placed her saddle at my disposal for the ride to Nazareth, while all I met were ready with offers of help in

any and every way. The arm-chair critics who decry missionaries would, I fancy, be the last to sacrifice themselves for a principle!

Nablûs is a city of over 20,000 inhabitants, of whom only 700 are Christians, 200 Jews, and only 160 Samaritans — in other words, it is a great Moslem city; but the 160 Samaritans are of far greater interest to the traveller than the 1,900 Moslems—for here are a people who may be the direct descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, and are, at any rate, the direct descendants of the Samaritans of the time of our Lord, who were held in such detestation by the Jews. The accepted theory of their origin has long been that they are the descendants of the Assyrian colonists brought to Samaria when the Israelites were carried away captive, as described in the second book of Kings— "And the King of Assyria brought men from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Aova and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria

instead of the children of Israel." But the Bible does not say that all the Israelites were carried away captive, and it expressly tells how the colonists, being alarmed by the depredations of lions, sent for an Israelitish priest that he might teach them "the manner of the God of the land," and "how they should fear God" and obtain His protection; so we know that at least one priestly family returned to Samaria. They must certainly have dwelt on Gerizim, the Holy Mountain, and may have intermarried with the colonists. The Samaritans themselves assert that they are descendants of this descendant of Aaron, and it may be pointed out that their features, stature, and build bear the closest resemblance to the Jews, and prove their Israelitish origin. "The lean and weedy figure is peculiar to the Palestinian Jews, and contrasts forcibly with the obesity of the Turks and the sturdiness of the peasantry. For hundreds of years the Jews have kept their race pure, and so have the Samaritans. Since the

time of Christ at least, Jews and Samaritans have probably never intermarried, yet we find them now closely alike in their characteristic physiognomy."[1] Further proof of this theory is found in their ancient passover rite, and the fact that the ancient copy of the Pentateuch, which the Samaritans so greatly prize, is substantially the same as the Jewish text. It is unthinkable that they would have adopted the religion and sacred books of a nation they hated, and authorities agree that therefore the original copies must have been made before the time of Ezra, and before the schism between Jew and Samaritan became intense. The fate of the ten tribes that were carried into captivity beyond the Euphrates has never been ascertained, and it may well be that these descendants of the priestly family which returned is the last remnant of them.

The cause of the rupture between the Samaritans and the Jews was originally the question as to where the Temple should

[1] "Tent Work," vol. i. p. 36.

be rebuilt. The Samaritans assert that the whole of Israel, with the exception of the Jews, wished it to be on Mount Gerizim, the place of Jacob's dream. It ended in the building of two temples—the Samaritan, on Gerizim, of which the ruins were standing at the time of our Lord, and to which the woman of Samaria alluded when she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" —and the Jewish, at Jerusalem. The Samaritans were all but wiped out after a rising against the Christians in the sixth century, and some migrated to Egypt, others to Gaza, where they built a synagogue; but all that are left are now to be found at Nablûs, which has its Samaritan quarter built round the synagogue, in which are preserved the sacred rolls of the law.

The oldest and most precious of these ancient manuscripts, which is only exposed to the eyes of the people once a-year—on the Day of Atonement—is very rarely shown to visitors, and only in the presence of the High Priest. There is another copy pre-

served at Jerusalem, which is also very precious, and known as the Fire-tried Manuscript from a tradition in connection with the dispute concerning the site of the Temple. The Samaritan story is that copies of the law made by Sanballat and Zerubbabel (representing the party which favoured Gerizim and those who favoured Jerusalem respectively) were cast into the fire in the presence of the King, and Sanballat's roll leaped out of the fire three times, while the other was consumed. The manuscript at Jerusalem, which is believed to have been thus miraculously preserved, has been in England, and was offered for sale at £1,000—its present owner obtained it from a Samaritan for a bad debt; but how so precious a possession of the nation (if the word may be applied to a community of 160 souls) came into private hands is difficult to understand.

The Samaritan religion is the Judaism of the patriarchs. Some authorities even think that their view that Gerizim was intended

to be the Temple mountain is well grounded, as Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Book of Moses, and the reading of the law is enjoined on the twin Samaritan mountains. To the Samaritan Gerizim is "the earth's centre, the house of God, the only mountain not covered by the flood, the site of altars raised by Adam, Seth, and Noah, the Mount Moriah of Abraham's sacrifice, the Bethel of Jacob's vision." They look for a prophet under whose direction the Ten Commandments will be found under the twelve stones on the sacred mountain, and under the stone of Bethel the golden vessels of the Temple. Perhaps one of these days excavators may turn their attention to Gerizim, and find there what they looked in vain for beneath the sacred rock at Jerusalem.

If you listen to Moslem or Jewish accounts of the Samaritans, you will be told much concerning their beliefs that is obviously untrue—as, for instance, that they worship a dove, which the Jews assert; or, what is commonly believed by the Moslems, that

the number of males never exceeds eighty, and that one of the eighty dies as soon as a male child is born. As among the patriarchs, bigamy is allowed by the Samaritans if the first wife is childless, and it is a curious reminder of Old Testament history that the women are not allowed to wear earrings, because their ancestors gave their golden earrings to be melted into the Golden Calf.

There has recently been published a Samaritan Liturgy, which throws considerable light on the religious life of this remarkable people, for it contains hymns for use on great festivals and also on the religious occasions of private life.[1] This liturgy, the result of twenty years' labour and patient scholarship, is collected from materials in London, Oxford, Manchester, Gotha, Paris, and Rome, and its publication shows the deep interest of scholars in the tiny community left at Nablûs of a once powerful people.

[1] "The Samaritan Liturgy," edited by A. E. Cowley. Oxford Clarendon Press, 1909.

CHAPTER VIII

NABLÛS AND SAMARIA

On the morning after our arrival we set out an hour after sunrise to see Nablûs, guided by one of the native servants of the hotel; for apart from the difficulty of finding one's way through the tortuous streets of an Eastern town, we were told that we might be exposed to unpleasantness from fanatical Moslems if we went alone, and that in any case we must be very cautious in photographing not to offend native prejudices. First we ascended the lower slope of Gerizim to have a general view of the picturesque town nestling in its gardens and orchards, where the vivid green of fig, walnut, mulberry, orange, and lemon trees alternated with the soft grey of olives, and patches of



NABLUS—THE ANCIENT SHECHEIM.

[*Face p.* 142

pink almond and red pomegranate blossom were set like jewels among the verdure.

A tower, surely of Crusading origin, though now a mosque, made a foreground to one of the most beautiful pictures I have seen in the East, and the camera has commemorated it—alas, without the colours!

The "sound of many waters" was in our ears as we skirted the base of the mountains with the town beneath us, and very grateful was the music of its cool sounding ripple, for though the hour was still early, in this narrow valley the heat of the sun soon became intense, and we abandoned our intention of visiting the springs higher up the hillside, in favour of the bazaars, where there is always shade from the screens spread from house to house across the narrow streets.

On our way there, however, we met a very fine-looking Moslem, who made so striking a picture in his flowing white robes against the background of an arch that our fingers itched to "snap" him, and we begged

our guide to courteously ask his permission to do so, to which he graciously assented. He waited most patiently till the camera was fixed on its tripod, and fell in good humouredly with our suggestions as to pose, so that we detained him some considerable time, yet as he was evidently a man of some position, we did not like to offer "backsheesh," and could only express our thanks through our interpreter. We parted with mutual bows and smiles, but not for long; he had not gone fifty yards before he turned back to ask politely for a small gratuity! Such is the East! I believe you may offer a tip to almost any one of any rank without fear of hurting his feelings!

The bazaars of Nablûs, like the bazaars of all Oriental towns, are the centre of the city's life—not alone a purchasing place, but a meeting-place, where news is always to be heard, and rumours are handed round till credited as facts. The crowd was so thick that we attempted no photographing, though the people were very picturesque. The town

of Nablûs is well built, and one long street runs through it. Its chief mosque is a Byzantine basilica with a fine Gothic portal, which reminded us of the lovely Gothic churches in Cyprus, now given over to Moslem worship. A memory of the Crusaders lingers in the ruined "Lepers' Mosque"—once their hospital—and of ancient Shechem in the rock tombs near the present cemetery.

From the noisy streets of the native town, and from the beggars, we were soon glad to escape into the quiet and coolness of the mission hospital. I am sure the restfulness and peace of the hospitals must be a priceless boon to native sufferers brought from homes where the sick have to inhabit a common living-room, where all the household carry on their avocations, and well-meaning neighbours add to the crowd and consume the air! Among the patients was a lovely Circassian girl, whose beauty I have rarely seen equalled. Perhaps she guessed at my admiration, for she smiled at us, and

seemed pleased with our notice. Later, after a rest and early lunch, we set out on donkeys for Samaria, with Thermos flasks and a tea-basket hung on our pommels. I had scruples about this arrangement! It seemed almost profane to drink tea out of a Thermos flask in sight of the ruins of Samaria—almost like eating in the porch of a church; but common-sense and an Englishwoman's love of afternoon tea prevailed, for the way was long, the weather thirsty. Nor did we regret our decision when tea-time came, for the home-made cakes from the mission hospital were excellent!

The valley widened after we left the town, and led through olive groves to a point where our pathway left the main road that goes on to the coast, and ascended by a footpath through fields of corn studded with olives and fig-trees. It would have been an idyllic ride but for the donkeys—one went too fast at times, and stopped to speak to friends at other times, quite regardless of the wishes of his rider; the other refused

to go at all without the beating we could not and would not administer, so our ride resulted for some distance in a walk, towing two unwilling little beasts behind us. To do them justice, I must say, however, they mended their manners on the return journey, while our missionary friend rode an ass that was a model of what an ass should be —a creature that patiently plodded along, or even trotted at a word of encouragement, setting a noble example to his brethren.

There were advantages in walking, for me at least, as I was free to pick the wild flowers by the way. "Palestine primroses," really a yellow scabious of the exact shade of a primrose, were the most frequent, but the scarlet anemones were still in bloom, and cyclamen grew in shady places and perfumed the air. Here and there ploughing was still proceeding though the time of year was so far advanced; but the "latter" rains had been unusually late, for we had encountered them at Jerusalem. To strangers to the East the primitive methods of agri-

culture are most fascinatingly interesting, being exactly those mentioned in the Bible. Once I wondered why the verse, "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven," did not read "hands" instead of "hand." Now I know that only one hand is ever used or needed to guide the plough in Syria, and that if that one hand were not guided by the eye—*i.e.*, if the man looked off from his work—it would make no straight furrow. Every ploughman carries an ox-goad—a hateful instrument of pointed iron—to urge the poor beasts on. When they rebel against their load, they learn by painful experience that "it is hard to kick against the pricks" (Acts ix. 5). The "unequal yoke" is not infrequently seen in an ox and an ass, or—as I have once witnessed it in Egypt, and the sight was very grotesque—a camel and a little donkey; but it never works well, as the animals do not pull evenly; and it was expressly forbidden to the Israelites—"Thou shalt not plough with

an ox and an ass together" (Deut. xii. 10). To the "yoke"—the piece of wood placed across the end of the plough and resting on the necks of the animals—there are innumerable references in the Bible. On the shaping of it depends the animals' comfort. When our Master said, "Take my yoke upon you . . . for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," He meant, as Professor Drummond has beautifully explained, His way of bearing life, which lightens its troubles, just as a well-fitting yoke makes the plough easy to draw. In the workshop at Nazareth He had fashioned many a plough and yoke with His own hands, and knew all the difference between a well- and ill-fitting one.

Such thoughts as these spring involuntarily to mind at sight of an Eastern plough!

Our path gradually wound upwards, disclosing more and more of the plain beyond the hills and dales—the great "Valley of Barley," called by the Arabs "Wady esh Sha'ir" from the luxuriant crops of grain. The peaks of the hills here are almost all

crowned with little villages—doubtless placed there in times of remotest antiquity for safety, for each looks like a miniature fort. At the top of the ridge we had been gradually ascending the modern village of Sebŭstieh burst upon our view—"a city set on a hill that cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14)—and then we dipped down into the intervening wooded valley, and halted for tea under the shelter of a ruined arch that crossed a rivulet, and made a lovely setting for the hill town of Samaria in the distance. Our guide-book told us that the stream by which we rested may have been that in which Ahab's blood-stained chariot was washed: "So the King died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the King in Samaria. And they washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood" (1 Kings xxii. 37).

The ancient political capital of Israel has a wonderful position. The Hill of Samaria on which Omri built his royal city is a plateau 400 to 500 feet above sea level,

in the centre of a basin nearly five miles in diameter, almost surrounded by lofty hills —therefore almost completely isolated. As in the Bible, so in the Talmud, Samaria is known as the "Watch Tower," for on the north it commanded the main road to Jezreel over a narrow mountain pass, on the west the highway to the coast, and on the east that to the Jordan and Gilead. The sides of the hill are terraced and covered with vines, but the terraces may have been made originally for a less peaceable purpose, as Josephus relates the hill was scarped by Herod the Great.

The last part of the ascent was exceedingly steep, and we could imagine how easy the city was of defence. The only hope of taking Samaria was to starve it out, which the isolated position of the hill rendered feasible for an army sufficiently large to encompass it; and this is what the Syrians did in the great siege, when "An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver" (2 Kings vi. 25). Having gained the top,

we paused to look over the surrounding valley, in which that great host was encamped. Near to where we stood must have been the city gate, where the starving lepers sat overlooking the enemy's camp, and resolved to throw themselves on the mercy of the Syrians rather than perish by hunger. In the distance, across the hills, we saw the "way unto Jordan," by which the panic-stricken army fled, leaving the road "full of garments and vessels" (2 Kings vii. 15).

Modern Sebŭstieh was as much interested in us, as we were in old Samaria. Our friend the missionary was known to the inhabitants, and they crowded round to welcome her and gaze at us. We were escorted by men, women, and children to the house of one of the well-to-do townspeople, where our friend had been asked to visit a sick woman; we, at the same time, were to have the opportunity of studying native life at home. We passed through the outer door into a great courtyard, from which steps ascended to the upper storeys.



INTERIOR OF A HOME IN SAMARIA. [*Face p.* 152

The central space presented an animated scene; in one corner women were making bread, but all stopped their avocations to stare at us. It was a patriarchal household of more than one generation, and children were plentiful. The head of the household —a tall striking-looking man with a long grey beard, clad in a long dark robe with a turban on his head—welcomed us courteously, and, in reply to the missionary lady's request, said we were welcome to photograph the house and any members of his family we liked. Nevertheless the younger ladies (some of whom were rather pretty, and all very attractive in the simple, picturesque native dress, with their hair done in two long plaits hanging over their shoulders) proved coy, and hid themselves in doorways; so we only took a general view of the courtyard and those of the household who happened to come in the picture. I followed our friend up a crazy outside staircase to the women's apartments to see her patient, and was amazed that they asked my husband

to enter too. The sick woman was suffering terribly, but her looks and gestures betokened extraordinary patience, and gratitude for the missionary's help. She lay on a bed of staw on the floor, and many other women and children shared the small apartment—yet this was a prosperous household! On leaving we asked the missionary's advice as to offering any money, and she replied that the head of the house and the boy who held our donkeys would look for some coin. I entirely agreed to the latter gratuity; the former seemed to me mistaken. What should we in England think of a visitor from the East who asked to see the interior of an English home and offered us a tip on leaving? Might we not give these very polite people credit for wishing to show courtesy to strangers without doing it for money? The travellers who bewail the evil of the eternal backsheesh should remember that travellers originally brought it about by taking the low standard that kindness and courtesy from

an alien race must always be purchased with coin.

Sebŭstieh has other Bible memories than those of Old Testament history, for the beautiful Crusading Church of St John, now in ruins, was erected on the spot consecrated by tradition as the scene of the beheading of John the Baptist. Though Conder held the tradition erroneous, it seems more likely, as other writers have pointed out, that Herod would be holding his court in his palace at the capital than at Fort Machærus, in the lonely Wady Farah, to the East of the Dead Sea, where Josephus asserts the Baptist suffered, probably because it was the last place where he was baptizing, "because there was much water there" (John iii. 23), before he was cast into prison.

The crypt containing the traditional tomb of the saint, held in peculiar reverence by the Arabs, is evidently much older than the church—and, indeed, the tradition goes back to the fourth century. The natives show you another grave, which they say is that

of Elisha, who spent a considerable part of his life here.

There is yet another mention of Samaria in the New Testament; it is that of Philip's preaching, with its wonderful results of the casting out of the unclean spirits, and the healing of the palsied and the lame, which so impressed Simon the Sorcerer—as going far beyond his power of hypnotism — that he presented himself for baptism, yet grasped its spiritual significance so little, that he afterwards offered the disciples money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost," and met with the stern rebuke, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right with God."

What memories crowd upon us as we stand on this hill of Samaria, and what stories its stones would tell us could they but speak — nay, what light may not be thrown on Bible history if the excavations, begun by Dr Reisner, who has discovered

Omri's palace, are continued. The more important results of his work have been covered up again, and he was away at the time of our visit, but we saw the amphitheatre, and were told that among the treasures dug up by the excavators was an ivory mirror with an inscription proving it to have been a present from the contemporary King of Egypt to Queen Jezebel.

The ruined columns of Herod's Great Colonnade—of which sixty are standing, though decapitated, while others lie prone on the ground—are immensely impressive. Here was once the high street of a great city, that must have witnessed many a royal progress and echoed to the shouts of the multitude, where now all is silence. Olive-trees grow among the ruins, and grass grows over the stones of what were once glorious buildings upon this hill; while below in the valley lie more columns and more stones, literally fulfilling the words of the prophecy—"I will make Samaria as an heap of the fields, and as the plantings

of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley." Of the temple on the summit of the hill which Ahab erected to Baal there is no trace—"And all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces . . . and all her idols will I lay desolate" (Micah i. 7).

We did not talk much on our homeward way—there was too much food for thought! The sun set gloriously, and the little hill villages on which Elisha and Ahab looked—for many of these mountain spurs have been covered by a succession of just the same mud huts for four thousand years—caught and held its glow, while the valley lay already in shadow; the moon rose and the stars came out as our little donkeys plodded, and sometimes stumbled, along the mountain path. In the valley it was darker, among the olive groves, and with the high hills rising on both sides of us. We found our voices again for the sake of company, for the road was lonely, and Samaria bears an ill reputation. Our

donkey-boy started singing, as our companion explained to frighten away the evil spirits! It was not unnatural that the talk turned to the dangers the missionaries are called upon to encounter in travelling unescorted at night, or in turbulent districts by day, to visit patients at a distance from the hospital. The quiet little woman who accompanied us seemed to have no fear; she said that no one would touch her or her fellow-workers, and that, indeed, native men frequently asked lady missionaries if they could keep in their company for greater safety. We talked of the troublesome times in Nablûs, of the days when no European could venture into the streets or bazaars except disguised in native dress. We learned how very nearly a massacre of the Christians, more far-reaching than the Armenian atrocities, had come about just before the accession of the Young Turks to power, that the order was already signed, and would have been put into execution to gratify the most fanatical and worst

element of the people as a bid of Abdul Hamid for popularity — if the revolution had failed. It would have gone ill with the Christians in Nablûs, where the Moslems outnumber them twenty to one. Perhaps the greatest safeguard for the future under the new *régime* is that Christians and Moslems serve side by side in the Turkish army in Palestine, which can never again be used as an effective weapon to stamp out Christianity. Eye - witnesses of the events in Jerusalem during the anxious days that followed last Easter, testified to the admirable behaviour of the soldiers when feeling ran high and the city was full of fanatics from Hebron, who had come up for the great Mohammedan festival of Neby Musa. This celebration was fixed by the Moslem authorities to coincide with the time of the Christian Easter, and thus counteract the enormous temporary increase in the Christian population, — due to the many pilgrimages, —which was viewed by the Turks with uneasiness lest it should be utilised for a rising.

CHAPTER IX

ON TO GALILEE

Our days in Palestine were numbered, for steamers, like time and tide, wait for no man ; nor do they sail so frequently as one could wish from Palestine—that is if one desires to travel by a particular line, and we were faithful to our old friends the Austrian Lloyd, and by this wished to make a connection with their fast steamers from Egypt. We had counted on pushing through from Nablûs to Nazareth in one day's ride, but were advised not to attempt so many hours in the saddle to which we were unaccustomed ; though to break the journey at Jenin, on the edge of the great plain of Esdraelon, meant that we lost a day we had intended to devote to Mount Gerizim. So it was we

never stood upon the summit of that sacred mountain, nor saw the wonderful view which extends from the far away peak of Hermon on the north, over the Vale of Sharon to the Mediterranean in the west, and over a billowy sea of stern mountains and green valleys that recall the words of the familiar hymn, "The valleys stand so thick with corn that even they are singing."

It is indeed a "pleasant land—a land flowing with milk and honey," that was the portion of the house of Joseph; and perhaps after all the fertility and beauty of the valleys is realised more from passing through them than viewing the country from a height. Yet I deplored more even than the view, not to have seen the sacred places of the Samaritans—the famous Twelve Stones which, according to their tradition, are those brought from the Jordan (Josh. iv. 3), the Sakhrah or Sacred Rock, said to so closely resemble Mount Moriah in its formation and with "praying places" of unhewn stone, ike those of the Haram at Jerusalem,

as well as the ruins of the early Christian church built on the foundations of the first Samaritan Temple.

I hope, too, if I should ever return to Palestine to ascend Mount Ebal. The Mount of Cursing is higher than the Mount of Blessing and commands an even finer view, if not the finest in Palestine, and it too has ruins upon the summit — maybe of crusading origin, for the Arabs call the piles of stones "Khurbet el Kenisch"—the Ruined Church.

When our horses came to the door on the morning of our departure from Nablûs, we scrutinised them with anxious eyes, for much depends upon your steed on a journey where wayside inns are not, and to fail to reach your destination by nightfall means sleeping in the open. To outward appearance they were satisfactory. The animal my husband was to ride, a white one, was praised by our host as the best in Nablûs, and had formerly been his own property. The owner of the horses rode a donkey with

bulging saddlebags which held our small luggage; so we set forth by a way that was already familiar, for the first stage of our journey led past Samaria. My husband praised the action of his mount, but not I mine, for I was jolted terribly whenever I attempted to trot; worse, however, was to follow, for before we reached Samaria the white horse shied and turned restive. Suspecting the poor creature had been stung by a fly, we dismounted and discovered that the girth was cutting into a horrible wound. Here was a problem for humanitarians—to ride a wounded horse outraged our feelings—to turn back involved the loss not of a day but of a week or longer, for it meant missing our steamer and possibly failing to get accommodation on the one following—it meant, moreover, giving up the route *viâ* Jenin, Jezreel, and the heights of Gilboa, and making a long détour by carriage to the coast at Haifa and thence to Nazareth, for there were no other riding horses at Nablûs. We had done the unusual thing in

not engaging horses through from Jerusalem and this was the result! It was no good crying over spilt milk; we decided to walk as far as possible, and pushed on, having shifted the girth from the wound and leading the animal, while the horse's master, seated aloft on the saddlebags, first surveyed us with something like derision, and then endeavoured to make us remount. I yielded when we reached the summit of the ridge, and at last as the heat increased my husband with some qualms did likewise, and to our relief in spite of the open wound, to which our eyes were constantly drawn, the animal did not now appear to be suffering. Nevertheless a shadow was cast over the brightness of our day, and though the road led through a lovely country full of Bible interest—for we traversed the valley of Dothan where Joseph's brethren were pasturing their flocks when he came to them on an errand from his father, and was by them sold to the Ishmaelite caravan on its way to Egypt—we were thankful to reach

Jenin, which, owing to our slow progress, we only just accomplished before nightfall.

Jenin was a delightful surprise! No one had told us anything of it except that there was a Hamburg - American hotel there, which served as a half-way house between Nablûs and Nazareth. We came at twilight to a palm grove, on the borders of a great plain, stretching away like the sea in the gathering dusk which hid the distant hills that border it. Among the palms, lights began to twinkle in low mud houses; for the poorest Fellah lights his little oil lamp as soon as the sun goes down, and lets it burn throughout the night. Love of light—the symbol of life—and dread of darkness is a characteristic peculiarity of the Eastern mind often referred to in the Bible. "Thou wilt light my lamp" (Ps. xvii. 28), and "the Lord is my light and my salvation," sang David of old, likening the spiritual presence of God to the most desirable thing the human mind could conceive of. Doubtless our Lord had in mind the scene He had daily witnessed



JENIN—"THE FOUNTAIN IN THE GARDENS."

[*Face p.* 166

at nightfall in His own humble home when He wrote: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matt. v. 15).

In the midst of the village the exquisite little white dome of a single mosque gleamed in the fading light, and the cry of the muezzin camefaintly in the wind calling pious Moslems to evening prayer. Here was enchantment —a scene ready made for one of Hichen's romances, full of the glamour of the Orient; the great plain before us now veiled in mystery seemed—not the plain of Esdraelon, the battlefield of Palestine—but a vast and unknown desert—the howl of Pariah dogs gave the last touch of weirdness! The Arabs we passed as we entered the little town slunk by in their long dark robes like ghosts, the air was heavy with the scent of a hot-house, for Jenin — the Fountain in the Gardens—is veritably a garden where orange groves give out the fragrance of their snowy blossoms to mingle with that of roses and

oleanders and other scented blossoms of tropic lands. A little stream meanders through the village, adding the music of moving water, so dear to Eastern ears, to the charms of Jenin? So peaceful it seemed, so remote from the world and all its haste and toil and discord; we were almost tempted to forego that inevitable steamer that was ever before our mental eyes, and linger there among the palms instead of pursuing our onward way on the morrow. Almost one wishes sometimes to be without that inconvenient thing the conscience of civilisation, which says, "I must do this or that—keep this or that engagement," and longs to be a child of nature knowing no timepiece but the sun, no necessity for doing anything but to live and to enjoy and maybe dance sometimes to the pipe of Pan!

Sunrise and sunset are the events of the Eastern day, and the traveller who is wise enough "to do in Rome as the Romans do" will adjust his life to suit the country and never willingly miss the magic



TWO WOMEN "GRINDING AT THE MILL."

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morning hours. The Syrian peasant opens wide his door before sunrise as an invitation to all to enter, and the open door frequently referred to in the Scriptures has, therefore, a special meaning of welcome to all who pass by in the East (Rev. iii. 8).

The first beams of the rising sun light upon the women fetching water from the well, just as their ancestors have done since patriarchal days, and grinding corn for the morning meal as Jesus who had watched the familiar sight so often, pictured them as doing in the day "when the one shall be taken and the other left" (St Luke xvii. 35). "The door shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low," is a beautiful bit of poetic prose that can only be appreciated by an Eastern, or those who know the East! To such the symbolism of the closed door and the cessation of the homely sound that heralds the Eastern day (as much as the milkman's cart does the Western) is full of solemn meaning.

The well at Jenin was just in front of our hostelry, and we were lurking in wait with the camera even before the sun, or the first village beauties, appeared on the scene; but as the sky grew pink and the first beams of light caught the topmost palms, came a long procession of matrons and maidens carrying waterpots on their graceful heads, and yet the sun had not risen high enough to illumine the fountain where they filled their jars. So it was that we lingered hoping for better things, and were not in the saddle till more than an hour later than the time fixed for departure; with the result that we encountered the great heat of the noonday sun on the bare heights of Gilboa and the shadeless plain of Esdraelon.

We had chosen the slightly longer route *viâ* Jezreel, instead of the direct road across the plain. We were also to have visited Nain, where our Master called to life the widow's son, but our guide either misunderstood his directions or purposely left it out to expedite matters, and I did not at

the time find it in my heart to regret it, for the intense heat and glare dulled one's imagination and made sight-seeing a weariness. Before reaching this stage, however, we had great pleasure in our ride across the heights of Gilboa, where a delightful picture of shepherd boys tending their flocks just as David must have done, reminded us that here it was that Saul and Jonathan fell in battle.

Jezreel was as much a disappointment as Jenin had been a delightful surprise. So I felt, at least, when I stood in the unsavoury lanes of this squalid village, surrounded by beggars, vainly seeking a little shade in which to look about me and reconstruct the scene of that fatal day for the house of Ahab, when far away down the valley, an approaching chariot was seen, and the watchman on the tower—which must have stood just where the modern tower in Zerain stands to-day—announced to the King that "the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of

Nimshi, for he driveth furiously." It seems to me not unfitting, that the spot that witnessed so much wickedness in high places, culminating in so awful a tragedy as the death of the Kings of Israel and Judah followed by that of Jezebel, should bear the impress of blight to this very day: as though it lay under a curse for a warning to wrongdoers for all time! Where Naboth's vineyard once was, there is to-day no trace of cultivation, but the ancient rock-cut wine-presses in the hillside speak of the grapes that once yielded their juice within them.

Through the valley of Jezreel, we rode to another Arab village Sôlam, built on the site of ancient Shunem, where the Shunammite woman built the little chamber in the wall for Elisha, "the holy man of God," who so often passed by her house, and was repaid for her disinterested kindness by the fulfilment of her, humanly speaking, hopeless wish for a son. Looking across the plain, shimmering in the mid-day

sun, to the distant blue ridge of Carmel, some 15 miles distant, I pictured the distracted mother hastening from the lifeless body of her child, suddenly smitten with sunstroke in the harvest fields, to seek the help of the prophet of God, so confident in Divine power he could invoke to help in her sore need that she was able to answer the question of Gehazi—"Is it well with the child?"—in words that rose above mere human understanding, "It is well!" and received the reward of her faith when Elisha gave her back her living son.

Sôlam is built on the southern slope of the conical mountain Jebel Duhy, held sacred by the Mohammedans because the burial-place of one of their prophets is on the summit. A rather amusing story is told by Conder who had to ascend it for survey purposes, and relates that some excitement was caused in the nearest village by the sight of "pagans" standing on the sacred dome, "but the old custodian was quite reconciled by finding we had removed

our boots, had asked permission of the prophet himself, and had actually brought a can of whitewash, with which we whitened the entire dome—for survey purposes or out of respect for the prophet, as I believe he was led to suppose."[1]

The Crusaders called Neby Duhy Mount Endor or Little Hermon, probably thinking that Tabor and Hermon must be near together as they are linked in the Bible words "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name"; but the real Hermon is seen far away to the north, its snow-clad dome distinctly visible beyond the great rounded mass of Tabor. Nain lies on a spur of Jebel Duhy, so we were very near though we somehow missed it.

At noon, failing to find a tree or shrub to give a particle of shade, we made for the shelter of a native building, risking beggars and the importunities of children rather than remain longer exposed to the intense glare of the sun. Here we sank

[1] "Tent Work in Palestine," vol. i. p. 120.

gladly to the ground and opened our lunch basket, but nothing but fruit and drink was acceptable. A Bedouin made for the same shelter, and hungrier than we, accepted some eggs and bread with alacrity. There was now only a valley to cross, and then a steep ascent up the hill on the other side to reach Nazareth, whose white houses cheered us from afar. Our horses, eased of their saddles, grazed together with that of the Bedouin, and I noticed that the poor wounded beast seemed to enjoy his food and show less signs of exhaustion than the other. Can it be that horses as well as men innured to hardship do not feel pain like their more sensitive kindred at home?

Of the rest of the ride to Nazareth I have little recollection, for all my faculties were concentrated in an effort to endure the scorching heat and encourage the poor tired beast I rode. The distance to the little white town we had seen so far off seemed interminable as we slowly climbed the shadeless hill. At last we reached the

first houses of the modern village, which is surprisingly neat and clean and unoriental. In the balcony of the little hotel, a friend we had left in Jerusalem was seated who hastened to greet us and enquire the reason of our late arrival, for we had planned to meet at Nazareth on Saturday night and enjoy a peaceful Sunday together amid the scenes of our Lord's early life,—and now it was three o'clock on Sunday afternoon!

Explanations followed, and then we pushed on the last quarter of a mile to the Franciscan monastery—a far more attractive place than the hotel, for it is a fine building standing back from the street in a garden full of sweet smelling flowers with massive walls to keep out the heat and spacious rooms. A loquacious Arab boy admitted us—the monks seemed all to be asleep—and took us to the room we were to occupy, leading off the broad bare corridor common to all monasteries. Food and drink were pressed upon us, but we wanted only the latter, and the monks' good red wine and cold spring water revived us.

There is a delightful feeling of hospitality in being a guest in a monastery that is altogether apart from the atmosphere of an hotel. You are given freely of the best your hosts have, and the more justice you do to the viands set before you, the better pleased is the lay brother who serves you—this you may say is equally true of his *confrère* the waiter, but the difference is that the latter may have an interest in the length of the bill and the lay brother has none, for there is no bill—you give what you will freely as you have received!

Having quenched our thirst, the most desirable thing in life to us perspiring, dusty mortals, appeared to be a bath, but we asked for it with hesitation, for one does not usually associate a Syrian monastery with bathing facilities. Nevertheless a bath there was of some sort in the basement and hot water to fill it was promised if we had patience. It was worth waiting for, and we waited! I was to have my turn first and went down at the appointed time to

find a Franciscan lay brother busily engaged in stopping up a hole in the bottom of the bath with a cork; evidently no Sybarites had lately visited the monastery and demanded the luxury of baths and the stopper had been lost. Meanwhile the Arab boy brought pails of steaming water, and at last patience was rewarded, and I was able to proceed with my ablutions and emerge a self-respecting human being. Meanwhile we heard the owner of the horses had come to get his money as he intended starting back to Jenin at once. Horrified at the idea of the poor exhausted animals, and especially the wounded one, having no rest before they made the return journey, we begged our hosts to interpret our remonstrances to the man, but heard afterwards it was unavailing. No sooner had he received his money than he left, and quite possibly picked up another load on the way.

Towards sunset we went forth to visit Mary's Well — the one indisputable site in Nazareth, for it has the only spring



THE VIRGINS' WELL AT NAZARETH.

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in the village—the spring where the maidens and matrons of this hill village have filled their graceful pitchers night and morning from time immemorial, where, therefore, Mary must have come among them accompanied, no doubt, when He was little, by her Holy Son.

Of this well especially we hoped to obtain good pictures, but fate was again as unkind to us as at Jericho, for every day during our stay the dust-laden sirocco hid the sun and blotted out the brilliant sunshine without which an Eastern picture is but a sorry thing.

From the sacred well we climbed the hill to the girl's orphanage, built in an ideal position on the summit, to call on the mission ladies we had known at Jerusalem, and though so late in the afternoon could not resist the attractions of a cup of English tea. We drank it on the terrace, which overlooks Nazareth far below framed in by a double line of dark cypress trees which lead up to the mission. It was dusk when

we once more reached the monastery and soon after supper we sought our comfortable beds and slept as only those can who are thoroughly wearied with a day spent in the open air from sunrise to sunset.

Our first visit next morning was to the Church of the Annunciation, which belongs to the Franciscan monastery and is built on the reputed site of the Virgin's home. An inscription on the altar runs, "Hic verbum caro factum est" (Here the Word was made Flesh), but the tradition carries with it no certainty like that of Mary's Well. Another church is built where medieval Christians asserted that Joseph's workshop stood, but far more interesting was a real carpenters' shop just behind the monastery—the most primitive in Nazareth, and therefore likely to be just such a one as that in which Jesus daily worked throughout His boyhood and early manhood. Here we saw the carpenter fashioning the primitive wooden ploughs by hand with a simple knife, and photographed him at his work. The shop was a small apart-



A CARPENTER'S SHOP, NAZARETH. [*Face p.* 180

ment open to the street in front and lighted from behind only by a small shuttered window or rather opening in the wall, for it was guileless of glass. There were many other carpenters' shops at Nazareth but this was the only one untouched by the spirit of modernity.

Not the modern village with its prosperous air, due to the predominance of Christians in the population, but the fourteen hills around Nazareth are its real interest, for they are unchanged since they were trodden by the Master's feet. He played upon these hill-sides as a boy, and must often have sought retirement there after the day's toil in the quiet meditative years that preceded His ministry. In the spring-time these hillsides are carpeted with the exquisite wild flowers of Palestine that have inspired so much Bible imagery; from their summits is a glorious view of the great plain of Esdraelon, and away to the south lie Nain, Endor, Jezreel, and many other places sacred in Bible history, with the mountains of Samaria in the distance.

To Jesus, as a Jew, this prospect would call up the blessings promised to the four tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali. It is easy to understand the reference to the first in Genesis xlix. 14, 15, for Issachar's territory was the plain of Esdraelon, even now "a servant unto tribute" paying enormous taxes on account of the extreme fertility of the soil, while Jacob's prophecy of Naphtali that "he giveth goodly words" was fulfilled in our Lord's teaching and preaching within its borders. Here He spake His parables, here preached the Sermon on the Mount! We may not be able to tell with accuracy which was the Mount of Precipitation—the Latins and the Greeks each point out a different spot—but somewhere near "the brow of the hill whereon their city was built" the infuriated people sought the destruction of our Lord, and "he, passing through the midst of them, went his way" and bid farewell to the city which in the future ages should be world renowned as the birthplace and early home of Jesus.

CHAPTER X

BY THE GALILEAN LAKE

We left Nazareth early in the morning for the Lake of Galilee, and halted on the way at Kefr Kenna, which shares with Khurbet Kanah the tradition of being the Cana of Galilee, where Jesus was present at the wedding feast, and turned the water into wine. Khurbet Kanah, the site reverenced by the Crusaders, is about eight miles north of Nazareth, which agrees with the account of twelfth-century writers, but we know crusading accounts are not always authentic, and as Conder points out, "It seems far more probable that Kenna, on the road to Tiberias, would be the place twice visited by Christ, than the remote Kanah which is on no main line of travel." He has,

moreover, a theory of his own that it may have been neither of these places, but "the little village of Reineh on the road north-east of Nazareth, and only a mile and a half away; from it a main road leads to Tabor, and by this road is a fine spring called 'Ain Kânah,' spelt as the Greek leads us to suppose the Hebrew form of Cana must have been."

Be that as it may the inhabitants of Kefr Kenna make no doubt about their village being the Bible Cana, and the Greeks have gone still further and actually show you the stone jars which held the miraculous wine Kefr Kenna is not an attractive village, and has many beggars, chiefly children; on a hill to the west is the legendary birth-place of the prophet Jonah, and the little dome seen afar off is pointed out as his tomb.

About an hour and a half before reaching Tiberias we came in sight of the Horns of Hattin with their memories of Saladin's great victory in 1187, and the overthrow



ON THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

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of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem. A little later we reached the edge of the plateau we had been traversing and saw beneath us the Lake of Galilee—a name so familiar and yet so sacred that it hardly seemed possible we were really beholding with our waking eyes the scene of Christ's ministry!

The descent to Tiberias was steep and the road rough—so rough that we preferred walking, even in the great heat, to the terrible jolting of the carriage. Below us a little white-walled town with minarets and palm-trees nestled by the margin of the blue lake—this was once Herod's capital, the beautiful city that was building in the years when our Lord worked at the carpenter's bench in Joseph's workshop, and at the height of its glory during the years of His ministry. Yet no Jew of those days would set foot in it, for in digging the foundations an ancient burial-place had been disturbed, and, according to the law, contact with graves defiled the person, moreover the

Roman decorations of its palace were an abomination to the strict Hebrews; so tradition says that Christ never walked its streets, though He preached and healed the sick in all the surrounding villages, which then clustered thickly along the banks of the lake.

It is a curious coincidence that Tiberias, shunned by the Jews of the time of our Lord, became the chief seat of the Jewish nation after the fall of Jerusalem, and is still one of their four sacred cities. Two-thirds of its population are Hebrews (among them a large number of German-speaking Poles who have their own synagogue), and the tombs of some famous rabbis here are held so sacred all over the Hebrew world that an English lady in our company who worked among the Jews of our East End went specially to visit them that she might be able to describe them on her return to their co-religionists in England.

A small German hotel has arisen of late years just beyond the walls of the city, and



TIBERIAS FROM ROOF OF FRANCISCAN MONASTERY.

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here our conveyance halted, for it could proceed no further. Tiberias was built before the days of wheeled traffic, and only on foot or on horseback can you penetrate its narrow streets. Our destination was the monastery; we had heard of its great terrace by the lake-side, and promised ourselves some quiet hours of meditation there on moonlight nights. The hotel is said to be very comfortable, but the situation is more noisy and it lacks the atmosphere of repose and set-apartness of the monastery. The monks, however, in this instance were in no hurry to take us in; we had neglected to provide ourselves with a letter of introduction, and the lay brother regarded us dubiously till we mentioned the name of a Franciscan well known at Jerusalem which procured us admission. The monastery literally rises from the lake, with nothing but a little landing-place beneath where the small steamer that plies between Tiberias and the southern end of the lake (now a station on the railway that connects

Haifa with Damascus) was discharging its passengers as we arrived. Among them were two English Jesuit priests who joined us at the mid-day meal in the refectory, and proved pleasant company. Not even the heat of the Syrian sun in the early afternoon, could drive us from the terrace that day, to rest in our cooler bedrooms. Few people visit the Lake of Galilee more than once in a life-time; the hours were too precious to be wasted in a siesta even though we had risen with the sun; so we read the "old, old story" in the scenes in which it happened, and it seemed almost profane to make our tea on the terrace.

When the sun was setting and the Eastern hill, ("the country of the Gadarenes" (Matt. viii. 28), where the man possessed of an unclean spirit dwelt among the tombs) caught the glow we set out to explore Tiberias. It differs little from other Eastern towns, and of its past glories there is nothing to tell but portions of the old walls and a piece of mosaic pavement which

once maybe formed the floor of some splendid apartment in Herod's palace.

We lingered by the lakeside to watch the women filling their water-pots and carrying them away on their heads with easy grace, and started for the hot springs that lie beyond the town to the South, and have been famous since the time of Pliny and Josephus; but the way was dusty and the heat still great, for the shores of the Lake of Galilee lie nearly 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, and Tiberias has a mean annual temperature of 7 degrees higher than that of Jerusalem. The climate creates a profound lassitude in those coming from the hills of Nazareth, so we turned back and skirted the walls, picking wild flowers as we went, then again sought the terrace and saw the moon rise and the stars mirrored in the quiet waters of the lake, once trodden by the feet of Christ. Once trodden by the feet of Christ —not alone the shores but the waters of the lake! A vision rose before us of that

wonderful demonstration of the power of mind over matter, given by the Master when He came to His disciples walking upon the angry waves, which tossed hither and thither and threatened to shipwreck their little boat.

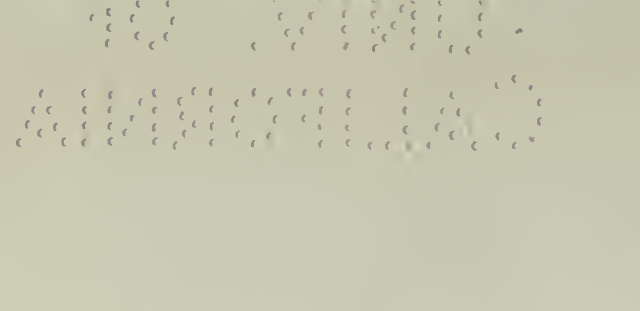
We remembered how poor impetuous Peter strove to emulate and reach his Lord, but, unable to free himself from the human belief of danger, began to sink "because he was afraid!"

Before we left the Lake of Galilee we, too, saw the waves lashed to fury in just such a storm as that during which Christ slept, and, aroused by the disciples despairing cry, "Save, Lord; we perish," arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and "there was a great calm." Most hallowed are the associations of the Lake of Galilee, and even to-day a wonderful peace seems to brood over this scene of the healing of the multitudes, where the lame walked, the deaf were made to hear, the dumb spake, the lepers were cleansed, and the dead raised to life by a touch of the great Healer's hand.



SHEPHERD LEADING SHEEP "BESIDE THE STILL WATERS."

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Next morning before breakfast I slipped into the chapel of the monastery to join in the worship of the mass; but before that I had worshipped alone on the great terrace as the sun rose behind the Eastern hills. The whole lake was flushed with the tender rose of dawn, and there came to my mind the half-forgotten lines of an American poet—

> "For men have dulled their eyes with sin,
> And dimmed the light of Heaven with doubt,
> And built their temple walls to shut Thee in,
> And framed their iron creeds to shut Thee out."

The Sermon on the Mount was preached, I remembered, under the blue vault of heaven, and most of Christ's ministry was performed in the open air.

The early morning hours are always full of interest in the East—then the country-people come in to town and the narrow streets and little stalls where all kinds of produce are available are a scene of animation. I looked in vain for the "five sparrows, sold for two farthings," which are mentioned by Mr Rider Haggard as being

still sold in the streets of Tiberias—that is, an extra bird thrown in to the purchaser of two brace; but wheat was being measured in the Biblical way, "good measure pressed down and running over," an extra handful being always added after the pressing down so that the measure overflowed. Near the old walls children were engaged in picking up the broken crockery thrown there, and breaking it still more effectually by dashing it against the wall and pounding the small bits to powder with a stone—I thought from sheer mischief, but I did them an injustice, for they were following a time-honoured way of preparing a fine dust to make cement. It is this deliberate breaking of pottery that is referred to in the Psalms, "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." A visit to an Eastern potter is a most interesting experience—you can sit for hours if you are of a contemplative mind watching him "thumping his wet clay" and fashioning it into moulds of beauty and utility. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to take



GOOD MEASURE PRESSED DOWN AND RUNNING OVER.

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photographs of the process as the potters almost invariably work in the dim light of caves; but what a subject for an artist is here! "Hath not the potter a right over the clay from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" rises unconsciously to your lips as you watch the wet clay divided into pieces, and where several potters are at work, one fashioning a homely household vessel, while to another more skilful is given the task of moulding a graceful vase, to be later decorated and rendered fitting for use in the guest-chamber. Not alone Omar Khayyam—the poet who has sung this theme so eloquently that his haunting verse brings before us the Eastern "potter's house" when we are far away—but many another thinker since Jeremiah "went down to the potter's house and behold he wrought his work on the wheels," have learned a lesson there of God's dealings with men. The ceaseless turning wheel is emblematic of life bringing its never ceasing action to bear on the

minds of men, but the wheel in itself is inanimate; its controlling force is not the potter's foot or hand but the potter's mind, and as he sees with his mental eyes the shapely vase that shall be, in the lumps of clay, so Divine mind beholds and gradually evolves the perfect man. Are not the finished vases lying in the sun, symbolic of the lives that have come out of stress and strain into a realisation of the sunshine of the love of God, and are waiting to be used in the Master's service?

The supreme interest of the Lake of Galilee centres at Capernaum, Our Lord's "own city," which has now been identified with Tell Hum, though of all Bible sites none has aroused more controversy than this, and so great an authority as the Palestine explorer Colonel Conder inclined to the theory that Khan Minieh, two and a half miles to the south-west, is the real Capernaum, because the early Christian converts were known as Minai or Sorcerers by the Jews, who looked on Capernaum as

the headquarters of the Christians. The chief argument for Minieh, however, was that the contemporary writer Josephus speaks of the fountain at Capernaum "which watered the plain of Gennesaret," and this has been identified with the springs of Ain et Tabigha, which are a mile and a half from Tell Hum but only half that distance from Minieh. This seemed a point in favour of Minieh impossible to overcome till Dr Sanday pointed out in his *Journal of Theological Studies* that the towns and villages on the shores of the Lake of Galilee were "not bounded by a ring fence, but each had its territory extending for some miles round the place itself," so it was quite possible for the springs to be within the territory of Capernaum. This fact of a town giving its name to the surrounding country also accounts to the seeming discrepancy in the gospels in the name of the place where the herd of swine, into which the unclean spirit had entered, ran violently down a steep place into the lake—one writer speaking of it as

the country of the "Gergesenes," and others "Gadarenes," the explanation being that Gergesa was a town in the district of Gadara.

The ruins of Tell Hum show that it must have been a place of importance, and the synagogue, being excavated by the Franciscans, is of deepest interest, for here Christ taught! The building is levelled to the ground, but there are remains of Corinthian capitals and fragments of carving, one of which represents a pot of manna. May it not have caught the Master's eye and suggested his words: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness"?

This is the synagogue erected by the Centurion whose servant Jesus healed—the friend of the Jews of whom they said: "He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him for he loveth our nation and himself built us our synagogue." There are indications of Roman workmanship that confirm the Bible story. Somewhere amid the ruins near by of what were once the dwelling-houses of Capernaum must have stood that house

where Peter's wife's mother "lay sick of a fever," and was raised to health by Christ's healing hand—the house that became our Lord's home while He sojourned by the Lake of Galilee.

In the streets, now hidden beneath *débris* and overgrown with the luxuriant vegetation, the woman who had "suffered many things of many physicians" cried after Him, and received the reward of her faith! Here He healed the leper and opened the eyes of the blind, and here the sick of the palsy had to be let down through the roof, because the crowds in the streets made it impossible for those who carried him to gain entrance by the door; here those suffering from all manner of ills came for healing, and none who came in faith came in vain.

Jesus used no drugs, taught His disciples no rules of health, even expressly stated "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John xiv. 12). Why has healing by Divine power been

lost almost sight of since apostolic times, and "a bundle of speculative medical theories" taken its place. Can a God of Love have intended healing to come by the torture of his dumb creatures? Have we not eaten of the Tree of Knowledge and put faith in material science before faith in God?

How is it that religion and medicine are divorced, that the medical student, even the kind humane physician, is often an unbeliever? Is this as it should be? May it not explain the failure of countless operations, of innumerable medical treatments where one drug after another is tried in vain, of the fashions in medicine lauded for a few years, and then discarded for a new "discovery," to be thrown aside for another because the so-called men of science have for centuries been groping in the dark of material knowledge and leaving God out of the reckoning.

There are signs that we stand on the verge of a new era in which mental causation will

be recognised as the main factor in disease. Not long ago I had the privilege of hearing a member of the medical profession state on a public platform that diseases had multiplied because the world had departed from "the Golden Rule." This pioneer went further than his *confrères*, who are beginning to grant that mind is more powerful than medicine, and write articles to tell us the effects of the emotions on the human frame. He recognised that it is unscientific as well as immoral to do evil that good may come, that there is sound common-sense in the Bible words, "Do men gather grapes off thorns or figs off thistles?" and that society is reaping the harvest of the dark deeds done in the laboratories of the so-called civilised world, in new and insidious diseases that are the direct result of the craze for inoculation against all the ills men believe themselves heirs to.

It is not strange that non-believers pin their faith in drugs! What *is* strange is that the Churches of the world have combined to disregard the words of the Founder,

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." These words had their fulfilment in the healing wrought not only by the twelve apostles, but also by the seventy who returned to report with joy that they could cure even the insane (Luke x. 17). It was proved that the gift was not limited to those actually appointed by our Lord during His earthly life, because Paul, the convert, wrought as wonderful works. Recall some of his miracles—at Lystra (Acts xiv. 8) a cripple from birth leapt and walked because Paul, meeting his gaze in the crowd, and "seeing he had faith to be made whole," gave the command. At Philippi (Acts xvi. 19) a girl possessed by a spirit of divination is freed from its control. At Troas (Acts x. 9) a young man who fell from a window and was killed is restored to life. On the island of Melita (Acts xxviii. 3) a deadly viper which fastens on Paul's hand has no power to injure him, and he cures one of the chief men of the island of fever and

dysentery and all the sick who are subsequently brought to him. All these were Gentiles, representatives of the great world outside the Jewish pale, and Christ prayed for all who should believe in future ages "that they may all be one."

Is this fact or fiction? If fact, if we accept it as literally true, there can be only one reason why the gift of healing has, with some rare exceptions,[1] been lost—it must be lack of faith! If it is not fact, the Scriptures are proved untrue!

[1] In the seventeenth century Valentine Greatrakes, who had served under Cromwell after living for a time a life of religious retirement and mortification, became possessed of the power of healing by laying on of hands and prayer. Having made many remarkable cures, he was remonstrated with by his bishop for "practising medicine without a licence," although he healed gratuitously. Cures are recorded of Luther, and in the last century Prince Hohenlohe Waldenburg was famous as a healer on the continent.

The cures wrought at Lourdes and Trèves are authenticated, but miraculous cures are not limited to the Church of Rome, but to be found in the annals of the Waldenses and Moravians, as well as among the Baptists and Quakers. To-day Christian Scientists record numerous cures in England, Germany, and America, many of which the medical profession are obliged to admit were diagnosed as organic disease and incurable.

Dean Farrar has strikingly pointed out in his "Life of Christ" that even our Lord was hindered in His work by unbelief. He dwells in this connection on the difference between other miracles and the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida Julias, which was, he says, "tentative," and has "none of the ready freedom, the radiant spontaneity of the earlier and happier miracles," where surroundings were more favourable. Jesus took the man by the hand, led him out of the village, spat upon his eyes, and then laying His hands upon them, asked if he saw. The man looked at the figures in the distance, and, but imperfectly cured as yet, said, "I see men as trees walking." Not until Jesus had laid His hands a second time upon his eyes did he see clearly. It was, he infers, necessary to remove the man from the influence of the pagan city, and to support his faith by using a method of healing believed by the Jews to be beneficial—even then the cure was not spontaneous. "We see from the Gospels themselves that

the richness and power displayed in the miracles was correlative to the faith of the recipients; in places where faith was scanty, it was but too natural that miracles should be gradual and few."

A little body in the Church of England admits faith healing and has come together to try to restore the former dispensation, but I believe they limit God's power to minor ills, leaving organic diseases to the doctor. Many, many earnest Christians I know pray for the recovery of the sick, but may it not be that they "ask and receive not because they ask amiss"? Is not much Christian prayer offered for the sick strangely like prayer offered to offended deities who, according to pagan belief, sends the affliction, and has to be propitiated? Have we not wronged God in attributing sickness to Him which is solely the result of wrong thoughts culminating in wrong deeds? It was well said by the late Professor Drummond that many people are kept out of the kingdom of heaven by the unlovely characters of

those who profess to be within. Many in bygone days were kept out by the terrible doctrine of predestination which now seems to us so impossible for any thinking mind to have accepted for a moment. Are not many seekers after truth being kept from Christianity to-day because they cannot reconcile the generally accepted dictum that disease is permitted by, and even sent by, God with their conception of Him as a God of Love?

These thoughts crowded upon me as I sat by the lonely sea-shore at Capernaum. This must have been the very spot where Jesus took a boat "to depart unto the other side," and so escape for a brief space from the multitudes that, attracted from far and near, thronged about Him in the city. I tried to picture the Master preaching from a boat on another occasion, and taking for His discourse the parable of the sower. The fertile plain of Gennesaret at hand, no doubt suggested the illustrations. The "good ground" is very good indeed; there



PLOUGHING IN PALESTINE.

[*Face p.* 204

is no richer soil in Palestine, but there is much "stony ground" also, where the rocks project through the earth, and the plain is intersected by well-trodden paths — the "wayside" that could produce no corn. The "thorns" are a feature of Syria; a bushy plant known by the name of "sidr" encumbers the ground everywhere—you see the peasants carting it away for fuel, and it figures in the Scriptures under the title of the "grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven."

About an hour to the north of Tell Hum are some interesting ruins that have been identified as ancient Chorazin, which shared the fate of Capernaum and Bethsaida; but we had not time to visit them, so turned southward again at Tell Hum, and bade our boatmen row us close along the green shore fringed with the fragrant blossoms of pink oleanders, till we heard the music of the rushing water of the "fountain of Capernaum," and landed at Ain et Tabigha, the probable site of Bethsaida, and where,

according to St Matthew's gospel, Jesus first found the simple fisherman — from whom the Roman pontiff proudly claims direct succession—casting in his net, helped by his brother Andrew, and called him to the work that was to revolutionise the world.

Yes, this sunny shore backed by hills was the home of Peter, Andrew, James, John and Philip—here they drew up their boats on this smooth strand; here they took their first lessons from the lips of Christ—the lessons that were to make of them saints and martyrs whose teaching should revolutionise the world. What an incredible thing it would seem, humanly speaking, for that handful of peasants to overthrow the religion of pagan Rome then at the height of her glory! What forces were arrayed against them, and how amazing and fascinating should we find the story if we heard it for the first time!

In this supremely interesting spot, there is a small hospice, established by the German Roman Catholics; where strangers



FISHERMEN HAULING IN NET BY THE SEASHORE.

[*Face p.* 206

arriving with an introduction are cordially welcomed and accommodated at a moderate charge if there is room; no more ideal retreat can be found by any one seeking perfect seclusion to contemplate the sacred associations of the Lake of Galilee.

On the way between Tabigha and Tiberias lies Mejdel, a poor hamlet to-day, yet world famous as the birthplace of Mary Magdelene. Doubtless in the time of our Lord it was of far greater importance, for heaps of rubbish cover traces of ruins that lie between the present houses and the shore.

From Mejdel no one who can spare the time should fail to visit the famous rock caves known as the castle of Kal'at Ibn Ma'an, because the caves and their connection passages tunnelled in the rock form a complete fortress which was the stronghold of noted bandits who took toll of all the countryside in the time of Herod. According to Josephus they were at last exterminated by letting down soldiers in large boxes lowered from the heights above

by iron chains, the robbers being dragged out with long hooks and dashed down the precipice. The ravine in which these caverns occur is a sublime gorge known as the Wady el Hamâm, leading from the plain of Gennesaret to the Horns of Hattin. The cliffs are of great height, but there seems to be a considerable discrepancy in the guide books as to their elevation at Kal'at Ibn Ma'an, which Baedeker gives as 1,180 feet, and Murray as 600.[1] It is reached in less than half an hour's ride from Mejdel.

Safed, generally accepted as the place specially referred to by our Lord when He said, "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14), though the description might be equally well applied to many towns in Palestine, can be reached in six to seven hours' ride from Tiberias. The road follows the banks of the lake as far as Tell Hum, and then the old Roman road to Safed, which, situated at an elevation of

[1] Possibly Baedeker gives elevation from lake, and Murray from the sea level.

2,749 feet, is the highest town in Galilee, and has a very fine climate.

Hebrews predominate among its inhabitants, next come the Moslems, said to be very fanatical, and there are but a few hundred Christians. Baedeker and Murray, it may be remarked, differ as widely as to the population of Safed as they do about the height of the cliffs of the Wady el Hamâm, and in much the same proportion; Murray giving it as 15,000, and Baedeker at exactly double that number.

Safed has many memories of the Crusades, and some ruins of King Fulke's strong castle captured by Saladin after the battle of Hattin are still standing, though it is doubtful if anything remains of the original building, as it has suffered not only from the attacks of Moslems and Christians in turn, but from more than one earthquake, the last of which occurred in 1837, since when it has been left to decay. Few people, I fancy, visit Safed except those specially interested in Jewish history, and all such will make a pilgrimage

to Meiron with its famous ancient synagogue and tombs of the rabbis of the first century; then after studying these records of Israel's past, they may see modern Israel, imported from Europe, in the colony of Rospina; where the persecuted Hebrews of Poland and Roumania have been given not only an asylum but a fresh start in life under the most favourable conditions by the generosity of Jewish philanthropists.

Unlike the emigrants to our colonies who have to clear their own land and build their own homes, the Jews of this colony have had everything done for them; neat stone houses built, orchards planted, lands enclosed, roads made by the promoters, and all handed over at a nominal rent to the refugees. There are rumours, however, that many of them have proved a failure as agriculturists, and the future of the colony is an open question. The promoters of the scheme are having a similar experience to the fatherly governments who do so much for the people that they become unfitted to

do anything for themselves. Some, however, will regard the failure of the Jewish colonies in Palestine as the fulfilment of prophecy!

What is to be the future of the Holy Land? Surely it is a terrible blot on Christendom that this little spot of earth sanctified by the Life of its Founder is still under Moslem rule! Had the Christian nations of the world cared as they should have cared—that is, sufficiently to sink international jealousies and unite in a common cause—they might long ago have taken it from the Turk by diplomatic means and placed it under international control—a land set apart, the common possession of all who name the name of Christ—a place for Bible study sacred as a place of worship is sacred, not to be profaned by differences of opinion still less by open quarrels! The Moslem might, with the kindly tolerance of Christ Himself, who ate with "publicans and sinners," have been left to worship in his own way till the clearer light of true Christianity

should dawn on his understanding. All this might have been, if Christianity had been the religion Christ taught; but, alas, is it? What does the Moslem see?—rivalry amid the nations caused the failure of the great Crusade in which three crowned heads were leaders—rivalry among the Christian nations has left Palestine to the Turk ever since—rivalry among the Churches, intensest in the Holy City itself and in the place where our Lord came to bring "Peace on Earth," disgraces Christianity in the eyes of the Mohammedan world. The moral victory of Christianising Palestine by the power of Christianity, for which the missionary strives, would have been accomplished long ago had every so-called Christian really been a follower of his Lord. The Oriental is quick to judge character, he admires the man who lives up to his principles though of a diverse faith, even as Saladin admired Richard of the Lion Heart.

There is a great spiritual movement in the world to-day, and to this we must look for

the removal of much in the Holy Land that is now deplorable. It is a sign of the times that the long suffering animals of Jerusalem have now a right to police protection—a sign that men's thought is changing, and that they begin to realise that for Jerusalem to be conspicuous for cruelty is unseemly. Christian and Moslem united in this reform, may we not take it as a sign of a new era—the first faint gleam that presages the dawn of a brighter day? The Golden Age of the Holy Land — like the salvation of the whole world—is only waiting for each man and woman who name the name of Christ, no matter of what race or country, to awake to their responsibility as Christians towards the cradle of Christianity, and armed with the sword of the spirit to join as brothers in a new crusade of peace. Then shall the cross, beaten back centuries ago, after a struggle of two hundred years, be carried at last to a victory won by Mind. God's ways are not our ways—infinity evolves too slowly for men's impatience. As a child snatches at

a toy trying to take from another by violence what he believes his right, so the Crusaders of old sought with fire and sword to win their way to the Holy Sepulchre. They understood as little of Divinity as did those two disciples, who, filled with resentment at the Samaritans' reception of their Lord, demanded, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them," and, like James and John, they were rebuked by the utter failure of the united armies of Europe.

In the centuries that have passed since the death of St Louis, the human race has been progressing—a brilliant writer of to-day in a book on the futility of war that is arousing widespread interest, logically proves the falsehood of the old dictum "you cannot change human nature." So-called human nature has changed and is changing—the dreamers of yesterday are the practical reformers of to-day, the idealists of to-day are building not castles in the air but houses founded on rock for future generations. Their minds

are shaping the destinies of nations, and may yet carry the banner of the Prince of Peace in triumph to Jerusalem. If, when we see a Moslem guard in the Holy Sepulchre protecting Christians from one another, the day of universal peace and brotherhood still seems far off, let us remember that here in Jerusalem we still have the spirit of the middle ages, not the kindly tolerance, the wider sympathy of the enlightened Christianity which is awake to a realisation of beauty, of brotherhood, and the power of love. We are told men's ideals have so wholly changed that the possession of the Holy Sepulchre, for which all the nations of Europe fought the infidel and poured out blood and treasure without stint, is now so little esteemed by statesmen that when a stroke of the pen could have secured it at an international conference when the Turk was at their mercy, they did not think it worth while!

I do not believe those statesmen were representative Christians! We have indeed

learned to worship not alone at Jerusalem, but in spirit and in truth, but as long as we treasure the earthly possession of those loved ones who have passed on, and lay them aside with scented lavender or "rosemary for remembrance,"—as long as we place flowers on graves and press our lips to pictures of beloved and vanished faces,—we cannot fail to hold precious the little land that was the earthly home of Jesus Christ, to wish to see its discords cease and a reign of harmony, peace, and justice make it once more a "fruitful land flowing with milk and honey."

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